LIBRARY
STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE
JOHNSON CITY, TENNESSEE

The Nation

FOUNDED 1865

Vol. CXLI NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1935 No. 3665

Contents

EDITORIAL PARAGRAPHS 365
EDITORIALS:
On the Brink of War 368
Propaganda by Lawyers 369
Are Newsreels News? 369
Living and Learning 370
ISSUES AND MEN. SUEZ CANAL BLOCKED! By Oswald Garrison Villard 371
CARTOON: DISCUSSIONS ARE PROCEEDING. By LOW . . . 372
THE SUPREME COURT AIDS THE UTILITIES. By George and Samuel Slaff 373
THE PRICE OF THE HOPKINS VICTORY. By Raymond Gram Swing 375
SHARING VICE AND VOTES. By Carleton Beals 377
THE DECLINE AND FALL OF FRENCH FASCISM. By Emil Lengyel 380
CORRESPONDENCE 382
LABOR AND INDUSTRY:
Local 22. By George Simpson 384
Mixed Pickles. By Heywood Broun 385
CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE 386
BOOKS, FILMS, DRAMA:
More Romains. By William Troy 387
Chamberlin's History. By Louis Fischer 387
The Pit. By Dorothy Van Doren 389
How Firm a Foundation! By Louis M. Hacker 389
Survival with Distinction. By Florence Codman 390
Films: Taxidermy on the Screen. By Robert Giroux 391
Drama: Little Man, What Now? By Joseph Wood Krutch . . . 392

BOARD OF EDITORS
FREDA KIRCHWEY JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH
RAYMOND GRAM SWING

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
MARGARET MARSHALL MAXWELL S. STEWART
DOROTHY VAN DOREN

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

SUBSCRIPTION RATES—DOMESTIC: One Year $5; Two Years $8; Three Years $11. CANADIAN: 50 cents a year additional. FOREIGN: $1 a year additional. THREE WEEKS' NOTICE AND THE OLD ADDRESS AS WELL AS THE NEW ARE REQUIRED FOR CHANGE OF SUBSCRIBER'S ADDRESS.

THE NATION. Published weekly at 20 Vesey St., New York. Entered as second-class matter December 13, 1897, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., and under the Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright, 1935, by the Nation, Inc.

Muriel C. Gray, Advertising Manager. Walter F. Grueninger, Circulation Manager. Cable Address: Nation, New York.

THE WELKIN is not to ring with passionate campaign oratory when President Roosevelt makes his cross-continental journey. When the trip was planned, before the adjournment of Congress, the President was in a bellicose mood, and the left-wingers in Congress who were fighting loyally for New Deal legislation certainly expected this journey to be the start of the 1936 campaign and were confident it would be pitched in a recognizably radical key. Since then the President, in the letter to Roy Howard, has granted business a breathing spell. Since then, too, Senator Huey Long has departed the political stage, and the President need not intervene on behalf of his threatened staff officers, Senators Harrison and Robinson. With the pledge of peace to business the President implicitly promised not to raise new reform issues, and so considerably modified his campaign. He will have to stand on his record rather than produce it as the beginning of a program still to be completed. Three speeches will be enough for him to say all that he cares to about his record; at least that is the number so far arranged. He omits Arkansas and Mississippi from his itinerary. He will also drop his address to the American Legion, which suggests that a concession to bonus seekers if one is to be made, as predicted, will be thrown into the campaign at a later date. The President will find himself personally popular, particularly when he leaves the East. He came back from a similar trip last year encouraged to be more forcefully progressive. He may feel the same tonic from the present journey. Had it been made before he addressed himself to Mr. Howard he might have produced a different letter.

JAMES M. LANDIS, once the plumed knight defending investors against the dragons, has at last become chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, a position for which he was originally slated, only to give way to Joseph P. Kennedy. "A damn good man," Mr. Kennedy called him on resigning, adding as a personal guaranty: "I see no reason why any business interests need have the slightest misgivings that he will not give them the fairest and squarest deal a man can get." Judging from Mr. Landis's record as commissioner we must indorse this sentiment. Not that we have any but the highest regard for his purity of motive, but we do feel he will lean backward to give business the fairest and squarest deal possible, and we wish he might show that zeal instead in safeguarding investors. That is, we should like to invert Mr. Kennedy's indorsement thus: "I see no reason why any man need have the slightest misgivings that he [Landis] will not give him the fairest and squarest deal a business interest might get." After the securities act was passed, the Administration suddenly decided to suspend the crusade and devote a year to "selling" government control to Wall Street. For this mission of appeasement Mr. Kennedy was chosen. He performed it well, if it can be considered a public service to have convinced Wall Street that the crusade was over. It always was intended that Mr. Landis should follow Mr. Kennedy, and then the SEC would become what it started out to be. But in the meantime Mr. Landis has doffed his plume and armor and we shall be surprised if he is much more aggressive than Mr. Kennedy.

SECRETARY ROPER has waived the right of the government to collect a $1,000,000 fine from the International Mercantile Marine, which has failed to meet the terms of the Leviathan lay-up contract executed March 18. Under this contract, as readers of *The Nation* will recall, the I. M. M. was relieved of its obligation to run the Leviathan, and in return was supposed to put $500,000 toward "the immediate construction" of a sister ship to the Manhattan and Washington. That the contract was vastly against the government's interest was shown in a recent article which appeared in these pages. As window dressing—for it was confidently expected that the Copeland-Bland bill would become law and make possible a construction subsidy—there was inserted a penalty of $1,000,000 if a construction contract was not awarded by September 18. It was also specified that this deadline could be extended by the Secretary of Commerce. He has done just that, and extended it ninety days. But this time, he insists, he means

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

business. Failure of the I. M. M. to act within ninety days "will mean that immediate demand must and shall be made for the $1,000,000 liquidated damages." Let us wait and see. In the meantime there are several questions which we should like to see answered. First, where was Roper with his bristling "must and shall" in the six long months between March 18 and September 18? Here was a splendid opportunity for him to make the best of a bad contract and recoup for the government one of the several millions of dollars that have been piped from the Treasury to the I. M. M.'s coffers. And second, why, when he announced the extension of the deadline, did he fail to mention that the I. M. M. had applied for it, and cloak it in a mandate that "with recent marine disasters as a guide, there shall be incorporated in the plans for the new ship . . . the latest developments in the art of ship construction," thus necessitating a revision of the plans which have already been drawn up? And why has it taken him a whole year since the burning of the Morro Castle to issue such an order?

THE PUBLIC will be mystified by the coal strike, after resting comfortably on the belief that the Guffey-Snyder act, whatever might be said against it, would at least maintain peace in the industry. In the final exchange of speeches before the breakdown of negotiations John L. Lewis charged openly that certain big interests did not want a settlement. He named Myron Taylor of United States Steel, "the Eugene Graces and the Weirs," the Mellon interests, the Berwind-White Company, the Pocohontas operators, and New York banks such as the First National, the Chase, the Manufacturers' Trust, and the Guaranty Trust. The negotiations broke down over a difference of three cents an hour in wages, which shows that peace would have been possible had it been desired. One result of the strike will be to bring firmer coal prices, without operators suffering the incalculable losses they are supposed to dread. The plight of the coal miners needs no reiteration, and the public should be startled to learn that the wages demanded at the present time would mean an annual income of $935.50, as against the $804 made possible by the increases in the 1934 agreement. The industry also is in a plight, partly because of the competition of oil and cheap power, partly because of internal competition. If all our national resources could be under social control and administered for the social good, and if the government had authority to take out of mining the men no longer needed there and fit them for other work, the problem could be solved. It does not appear that the Guffey-Snyder act will be enough.

CALIFORNIA is once more publicly entertaining its most famous prisoner, and with its usual courtesy. The Mooney hearings, in spite of the familiar perjuries, the familiar photographs, the often repeated story of a conviction on nothing but false evidence, have so far rather been going against Mooney—which after all is, in California, the most familiar part of the case. Attempts of defense attorneys to get the referee to rule on the admissibility of evidence were denied; a motion to bring Warren K. Billings into the courtroom was likewise refused, although it was later granted. In short, the same hostility to Mooney, whether or not he committed the crime for which he has now served eighteen years of a life sentence, is being displayed by the state authorities. It is quite likely that Mooney and his attorneys, Frank P. Walsh of New York and John Finerty of Washington, and his wife and sister, and everyone else close to the case expect just this hostility in San Francisco. When Mooney's petition for a writ of habeas corpus was considered by the United States Supreme Court a few months ago, he was told to exhaust every resource of the state courts before his case could be ruled on by the national tribunal. The present hearings are an attempt to do this; no one will be surprised if the writ he seeks is denied once more. And just as Mooney owes his life today to the intercession not of the Governor of California but of the President of the United States, so if he is finally freed it is probable that it will be at the hands of a higher power than that of his state. Mooney is California's bogy man extraordinary; the hysteria with which he is hated and feared is not amenable to reasoned argument.

THE SPECTACULAR RALLY of the Croix de Feu, held for the purpose of demonstrating "the organizing ability, fidelity to orders, and strength" of that extremist organization, did little to dispel the prevailing view that fascism is on the decline in France. While enthusiastic nationalist supporters claim that 80,000 men were gathered at Lizy-sur-Ourcq, on the outskirts of Paris, to hear the fiery exhortations of Colonel François de la Rocque, disinterested observers place the number at nearer 25,000. A dozen other rallies in widely separated parts of France were even less well attended. Impressive though they may have seemed to the participants, they contrasted sharply with the huge mass demonstration of 500,000 supporters of the Front Populaire described elsewhere in this issue. The anti-fascist united front, made up of parties ranging all the way from the middle-of-the-road Radical Socialists to the Communists, has been further strengthened recently by joint opposition to Laval's weak-kneed attitude toward Italian aggression in Ethiopia. As long as this organization holds intact, France may be counted on to remain a democracy.

WHILE HITLER is waving the swastika in the direction of Memel and German Jews are struggling to determine their status under the new laws proclaiming them aliens in the country of their birth, an ominous note is struck by the *Schwarz Korps,* organ of the Schutz Staffel. In a dispatch dated September 18 this newspaper is quoted as threatening reprisals against Jews in the Reich if boycotts against German goods in other countries, resulting from Nazi anti-Semitism, are not lifted. The dispatch continues: "*Der Führer* left no doubt in his speech before the Reichstag that in case the new law should provoke dissatisfaction there would be no recourse but to resort to additional far-reaching measures. The Jews had better take these words as a warning." It is hard to see how national meanness could go farther. The German Jews are completely at the mercy of the government: their fortunes and property can be seized; they are denied opportunity to practice their professions—Jewish doctors and lawyers may not have "Aryans" as patients or clients; their businesses are subject to violence by any storm trooper with a grudge; in many cases they are not even permitted to leave the country in which they are persecuted unless they go penniless. The new Ghetto is almost complete—the next step will probably be a Jewish cos-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tume, to match the Jewish flag which the Nazis gracefully permit to fly. The threat of further persecution in the event of continuing boycotts is no light one. The Committee of Jewish Delegations has issued an official protest to the League of Nations against the plight of Semites in Germany. Now that it has found its voice in the Italian-Ethiopian controversy, the League could make no better use of its freshly assumed authority than to make this protest felt.

THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY of Mexico, oldest institution of higher learning on the American continent, is faced with the loss of its cherished autonomy as a result of its bitter opposition to the "socialist" education program of the Cárdenas government. Although seriously embarrassed for funds, the university council has resigned rather than accept a government subsidy on terms which it insists would infringe on its freedom of instruction. The council is particularly resentful of the demand that all students have at least three years' training in the official preparatory schools, where the curriculum is rigidly controlled by the state, claiming that students should have the benefit of five years of "freedom" under the supervision of the university. Thus the issue is precisely the reverse of that encountered in American universities. It happens that the reactionary and clerical elements which have long dominated the University of Mexico are the ones seeking "academic freedom," while progressive and liberal groups are among those insisting that "the state and the university should be complementary and not antagonistic." Were the government's program calculated to develop an alert social consciousness in the minds of Mexico's oncoming generations, the "liberal" thesis would be more intelligible. But with the Cárdenas regime exhibiting definite fascist tendencies, the value of genuine academic freedom can scarcely be overstated.

ADVICES FROM ARKANSAS would seem to indicate that the only thing to be recorded in favor of the appointment of Vincent Miles to the Social Security Board is that it removes him from Arkansas. His record in that state is related briefly as follows by a correspondent in whom we have much more faith than in Mr. Roosevelt's social-security program. Vincent Miles is state commander of the American Legion, which under his leadership is regarded as the most reactionary agency in Arkansas; he was one of the leading advocates of the anti-sedition bills in the state legislature and spoke in favor of them at the legislative hearing; he worked closely with the Chamber of Commerce and with the vigilante committee to break the relief strike at Fort Smith last winter; at the last state convention of the Arkansas Federation of Labor he was seated as a fraternal delegate although fraternal delegates from Commonwealth College, the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, and the American Workers' Alliance were refused seats; he spoke from the platform following a red-baiting speech by David Fowler, John Lewis's choice for president of District 21 of the United Mine Workers of America, and began by saying that Mr. Fowler had made his speech for him—and then continued in the same vein. From other usually reliable sources comes the report that Mr. Roosevelt made this extraordinary appointment not to further the social security of the people but to bolster up the political security of Mr. Roosevelt. It seems that Mr. Miles was thinking of running against Senator Robinson in Arkansas. Senator Huey Long, the story continues, was going to help Mr. Miles. Rather than have Senator Robinson face this combination, the President found a place for Mr. Miles on the Social Security Board. If Huey Long had been shot earlier, the story concludes a bit ruefully, Miles would not have been appointed, for alone he was not considered a menace.

THE USE OF THE RADIO as an instrument for social good instead of a means of dispensing trivial and stereotyped "entertainment" was admirably illustrated by the first of the Thursday night programs sponsored by World Peaceways, with the cooperation of E. R. Squibb and Sons. In a world edging nearer war every day the strength of the sentiment for peace among peoples is increasingly evidenced. It is highly fitting that a great popular feeling should be reinforced and publicized by one of the great modern inventions for communication. In the event of war we know only too well how the conflict would be "sold" to the public: the resources of publicity, the press, and the radio would be called into service; we should eat war, read and feel war, dream of war, and war would literally fill the air. World Peaceways was started some years ago, based on the assumption that peace could be sold to the public in the same way. By magazine and newspaper advertising it has been presented from time to time; the radio broadcast is an attempt to gain even wider publicity for an idea—the necessity for world peace—which every last man and woman, from the manufacturer of munitions down to his most unwilling customer, will protest that he believes in with all his heart. But it cannot be insisted upon too often, it cannot be presented too often to a public that forgets easily and is responsive to every wind that blows. The field of battle, says World Peaceways, is the field of *dis*honor. If that slogan can appear in print and on the air enough times, not only the man in the street but governments may finally come to believe it.

AS THIS IS BEING WRITTEN, members of the American Newspaper Guild all over the country are balloting on the question of affiliation with the American Federation of Labor. Upon the results of the referendum hinges the future of the organization movement among white-collar workers. The Guild has acted honorably in its relations with the publishers and in the conduct of its few strikes, and in less than two years of existence has won both dignity and prestige. The Guild must survive. Yet it is difficult to see how it can continue to do so without joining forces with the rest of organized labor. The anti-Guild activities of the publishers and their editorial hirelings continue unrelentingly. Secession movements have been talked about in several cities, and a vote against affiliation would fan the fires of dissension. The Guild cannot continue as a group of isolated unions, "professional" societies, and drinking clubs, based on craft sympathy for striking workers. In its strikes it has proved that it knows the ABC's of trade unionism. Now it must learn to speak the language. *The Nation* hopes that the vote this week will produce the necessary two-thirds' majority for affiliation with the A. F. of L.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On the Brink of War

IN failing to reject unequivocally the peace plan drawn up by the League of Nations conciliation committee, the Italian government has shown the first signs of weakening since the Italo-Ethiopian controversy began nearly ten months ago. The odds are still strongly in favor of war, but there can be no doubt that Italy has been deeply perturbed by the unexpected strength of world opposition. Mussolini had obviously counted on the circumstances which led to the formation of the Stresa front preventing any strenuous objections to his Ethiopian adventure. He had a definite commitment from Laval allowing him a free hand in Africa, and he apparently believed that England could be appeased by minor concessions in the Lake Tana region. Being a thorough Machiavellian, it never occurred to him that principles could play a decisive role in international politics.

But events have moved too rapidly even for Mussolini. It has become evident that many months must pass before Hitler will be in a position to attempt his projected expansion toward the East. Meanwhile the necessity for preserving at least the rudiments of a system of collective security has forced France to reconsider its pledge to Italy and to move closer to Great Britain. Last but not least, peace sentiment in both England and France has compelled the governments of these countries to take a much firmer position than was thought possible last spring. The cry of war has been raised so frequently in the past few years that the world has been slow to recognize the gravity of the present crisis, but when the danger was finally realized, the strength of the anti-war reaction was unmistakable. Pacifism, despite the mockery of a Hitler and a Mussolini, still stands as a formidable obstacle to the ruthlessness of dictators.

Encouraging as has been the stand taken by the League powers during recent weeks, the effect has been largely offset by the shameless compromise offered to Mussolini. While it is doubtless true that substantial concessions were necessary if Italy was to be induced to abandon its war plans, the peace program drafted by the committee of five virtually bartered away the principles upon which the League is founded. Ethiopia was to retain its "sovereignty," but its police and gendarmerie were to be reorganized by "foreign" —presumably Italian—specialists. "Foreigners" were also to be given special privileges in the economic development of the country. Finances, justice, education, and public health were to be "reorganized" with outside aid. Italy was to be given a certain amount of Ethiopian territory in return for minor concessions of British and French Somaliland. Though these adjustments would be vastly more favorable to Ethiopia than the terms Italy would be likely to impose after a successful war, they play into Italy's hands by seeming to concede the fact that Ethiopia cannot manage its own affairs. The plan also seems to justify the suspicion that the powers are merely trying to get a finger in the Ethiopian pie.

The League appears to have failed in its first determined effort to curb the imperialistic designs of a major power. But this does not mean that the League is dead, or that the battle is lost. On the contrary, the real test of collective security and the League peace machinery will come when hostilities actually begin. In order to justify its existence the League must not only prevent the spark kindled at Ualual from spreading into international conflagration but demonstrate to the satisfaction of the entire world that a nation cannot repudiate its commitments under the Covenant with impunity. This, of course, is the function of sanctions. Mussolini, Hitler, and other would-be Napoleons must be shown that the day when might has the last word in international relationships is gone, and that any state which attempts to restore the law of the jungle must suffer the consequences. This may seem an unrealistic objective after Japan's success in North China. But the whole temper of international politics has undergone a change since 1932. The world has caught a glimpse of what it would mean to go back to the anarchy of pre-1914 days and has recoiled from the prospect. The League is considering a step that would have been unthinkable even six months ago—that of declaring sanctions against a great power. It is even possible that we shall see a determined effort to make these punitive measures effective.

The question then arises whether Italy can go ahead in spite of sanctions, win the war, and emerge the stronger for having defied the League. Much depends, of course, on the type of sanctions adopted. The most effective—closing the Suez Canal—involves such serious legal difficulties that it may not even be tried. Financial and commercial measures will not be immediately troublesome, because Italy has doubtless laid in large supplies of munitions and essential raw materials. Moreover, a war with Ethiopia need not entail the purchase of goods on anything like the scale necessary in a European conflict. Buoyed up by the easy victories which their armies will inevitably win in the early stages of the conflict, the Italian people will accept a certain amount of hardship without complaint. But if the war drags on for six months or a year, the pinch will begin to be felt. Without coal, iron ore, oil, or cotton—to say nothing of rubber, copper, tin, and other minerals—Italy's whole industrial structure will be menaced. And even if Italy pushes the war to an early and successful conclusion, the sanctions should be maintained as long as Italian troops remain on Ethiopian territory. Thus even commercial measures, courageously and persistently enforced, will probably suffice in time to bring Mussolini to terms and salvage the principle of collective organization.

Meanwhile, constant vigilance will be required to prevent collective action from degenerating into an imperialist squabble among the leading powers. At the moment the League powers are united in fighting for a principle the importance of which can scarcely be overstated. Circumstances have forced them to recognize that a collective system alone cannot give security if international injustice remains. Punitive sanctions against Italy can only gain universal support as long as this point of view is kept. Mussolini has staked everything on the belief that the normal jealousies and acquisitive desires of the powers will sooner or later regain ascendancy over moral principles. The future of civilization depends on proving him to be wrong.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Conspiracy by Lawyers

PROPAGANDA can be legitimate and even desirable, but when disguised as objective service to the general interest it is a menace against which the public has little protection. Gratitude, therefore, is due to the Washington news men for tearing off the trumpery costumes of the corporation lawyers who prepared for the Liberty League a unanimous legal opinion that the national Labor Relations Act is unconstitutional. These lawyers paraded as objective judges, and as such they helped to impress the community. But the press conference at which the opinion was launched never got down to a discussion of the brief. Instead the Liberty League and its legal committee were occupied in resisting a barrage of questions as to the authorship of the brief and the right of the men who wrote it to be regarded as anything but special pleaders. These questions developed the fact that not a professor of law and not a lawyer distinguished for service to labor had been invited to join the committee. It was made up exclusively of lawyers known for their work for big corporations. The day before the press conference Paul Ward, in the Baltimore *Sun*, had published a dossier of most of the lawyers, and the Liberty League began its conference by issuing a statement trying to demonstrate the propriety of the action. That set the topic of the proceedings, and the brief was never reached. E. F. Reed, who wrote it, and who was counsel for the Weirton Steel Company in its fight against the government, finally formulated a principle which should not pass without comment: "When a lawyer," he said, "tells a client that a law is unconstitutional, it is then a nullity and he need no longer obey that law." If this is the ethics of the legal profession many lawyers will call for a drastic purge. We also should like to hear from the American Bar Association whether by the standards of that society fifty-eight lawyers may unite in a public incitation of employers to defy the law of the land. The brief against the labor law is one of a series which the Liberty League is having prepared against New Deal legislation. If lawyers turn themselves into an organized body dedicated to inciting the public to disobey the law, that is conspiracy.

The work of the Washington correspondents prevented the Liberty League brief from being published in the news as an objective opinion. But this could not defeat one of the league's objectives. It has prepared a brief which would have cost a single corporation at least $100,000, and distributed it among all manufacturers for their free use. A $50 lawyer may now file it in his local court. That is why the league printed a first edition of 40,000 and now has ordered a second large printing. Every little employer who might believe he had no chance of resisting the labor-relations law is given a cheap and effective entry into court.

The burden of the league brief is the now antiquated doctrine that the individual worker must have the right to make his personal contract with his employer, and that majority representation deprives him of it. The legal arguments used will not, we imagine, stampede a high court. The Adair and Coppage decisions, of which much use is made, were virtually overruled in Texas and New Orleans decisions. The bearing of the ruling of Justice Roberts in the New York milk case (Nebbia *vs.* New York) on the point of due process is ignored. No reference whatever is made to the most recent decision, covering most of the field of the Labor Relations Act, in the District Court of Virginia. This was the ruling of Judge Luther Way, passing on the Railroad Act of 1935, which sustained that act. The spirit of the brief is bourbon, and it tries to give the impression that the same spirit animates the whole of American jurisprudence. Chief Justice Taft, heaven knows, was no left-wing liberal, but the spirit of American law as to labor unions is certainly better expressed by him than by the corporation lawyers of the Liberty League. Of labor unions he said in the Tri-City case (257 U. S.):

> They were organized out of the necessities of the situation. A single employee was helpless in dealing with an employer. . . . If an employer refused to pay him the wages he thought fair he was nevertheless unable to leave the employ and resist arbitrary and unfair treatment. Union was essential to give laborers the opportunity to deal on equality with their employer. . . . The strike became a lawful instrument in a lawful economic struggle or competition between employer and employee as to the share or division between them of the joint produce of labor and capital. . . . To render this combination at all effective, employees must make their combination extend beyond one shop.

The real argument of the Liberty League is that the company union is the true protector of the individual. Chief Justice Taft's dissent is not quoted in the brief.

Are Newsreels News?

NEW THEATER, the left-wing journal of the dramatic arts, has recently devoted a good deal of space to the discussion of reactionary propaganda in popular movies. To us, however, it seems that comparatively little stress was laid upon the clearest and most obviously reprehensible cases of all—namely, those in which so-called "newsreels" arrange sequences of events in such a way as to point a definite moral while ostensibly confining themselves to the presentation of news.

We have no doubt that certain of the dramatic movies are produced with an eye to the axes which Mr. Hearst—who has heavy financial interests in production—wishes to grind. *New Theater* also quotes a remarkable statement made during the war by Cecil De Mille, in the course of which this distinguished religious leader declared that the most noteworthy accomplishment of the moving picture during the year had been its success in spreading government propaganda. But it is not always certain that the political implications of a story to which radicals object are devised with sinister premeditation. Melodrama generally tends to be conservative in politics as well as in morals, and we suspect that *New Theater* sometimes interprets mere dramatic clichés as fascist propaganda. There can, however, be no question concerning either the intention or the disingenuousness of certain newsreel sequences.

Two recent cases which we ourselves observed come

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

immediately to mind. One was a little sermon on the Constitution, as blatantly demagogic as the speech of an Old Republican before the D. A. R. The other arose in connection with our recent interchange of notes with the Soviet government. Here the sequence ended with a series of flashes showing scenes of rioting accompanied by the suave voice of the commentator explaining that many of the disturbances were inspired by Communist propaganda. One need not, it seems to us, be pro-Communist in sympathy to find sickening the implication that industrial unrest in this country could be cured by getting rid of Moscow influence or to resent such infantile editorializing of what is supposed to be "news."

Theoretically there is, of course, no reason why an editorial on celluloid is not as legitimate as one on newsprint. The danger lies in the fact that every effort is made to convey the suggestion that no editorializing is intended. The editorials are sandwiched in between items of merely curious interest and the impression given is that everything has been caught by the undiscriminating eye of the camera. There is a great show of jolly news-hawking. The footloose photographer wanders here and there impartially recording everything from a surf-board wedding in California to the birthday of the quintuplets. And the fact that the longshoremen on the Pacific Coast would be perfectly happy if all the foreign agitators were sent back where they came from is merely mentioned in passing like any other bit of information.

Not all the newsreels are equally guilty. The Hearst Metrotone News seems to have been the worst offender, with Pathé News coming second, while casual observation leads one to conclude that Paramount News is far less given to propaganda. *New Theater* is urging a boycott of the Hearst weekly, and, indeed, several theaters—notably those at Amherst and Williams colleges—are said to have removed it from their program in response to student protests. Nevertheless, that boycott is a two-edged weapon which those who hope to use the movies for radical propaganda might well hesitate to invoke. We are, however, inclined to suspect that the theaters might be wise themselves to protest against the increasing tendency to editorialize the newsreels—not so much because of any interest which the owners may have in political doctrines as because patrons must certainly be catching on and will probably resent having things like some of the recent sequences foisted upon them.

The newsreels are enormously popular and they won their popularity largely because they seemed such a random sampling of the mad world. The French call them *actualités,* and though that happens to be only the usual French term for "news" it suggests better than any English word the quality which gave the cinema newspaper its appeal. One felt that one was getting a more direct contact with simple actuality than one could achieve in any other way. The camera seems almost moronically incapable of interpreting or revising. It seems to give events without even that degree of coloration inevitable when they are passed through the mind of the most factual reporter. But it is such untarnished records, not sermons from either the right or the left, which the newsreel patron usually wants, and we predict that the newsreel will lose its excuse for being when—to revise the ancient jest—the general public discovers that though photographs can't lie, liars certainly can photograph.

Living and Learning

DR. ALEXIS CARREL, returning from Europe the other day, touched on the subject of his recent book, "Man, the Unknown," the making of the superman. Briefly stated, Dr. Carrel's idea seems to be that superior individuals may be given a thorough scientific and speculative education over a period of twenty-five years of uninterrupted study, after which they will be in a far better position to understand, interpret, and direct the world than if they had spent the same years merely living in it and performing the ordinary motions of the ordinary citizen. By education Dr. Carrel means mastery of anatomy, physiology, biological chemistry, psychology, metaphysics, pathology, medicine; not to mention "a thorough acquaintance with genetics, nutrition, development, pedagogy, aesthetics, morals, religion, sociology, and economics."

This is a large order, and it has elicited loud horse laughs from several book reviewers, to whom it is an exquisite jest to think of a man absenting himself from the world and at the same time learning anything about it. "Life," says Mrs. Paterson of the *Herald Tribune,* "must be lived to learn it." And she adds that Dr. Carrel's comparison of his superman with the monks of the medieval religious orders is absurd, because the medievalists were thinking not about this world but the next. One need only remember Thomas Aquinas to realize the weakness of this objection; in the course of a lifetime of speculative thought and the most profound study St. Thomas educed a series of works that, while they were primarily concerned with man's relation to God, in the opinion of the medieval world the most practical and important aspect of his life, also took up in the minutest detail his relations with his fellow-men, political, aesthetic, domestic. His ideas presented the pattern in which the world could move. It would be rash to say that the world must move differently today, blessed as we are with the radio and the motion picture; but even admitting this possibility, it would be rasher still to assume that a man would learn more by twirling the dials of his radio and going regularly to the movies than by refraining from these matters while he studied and thought.

We are, of course, treated daily to the spectacle of a world governed by persons who have always lived in it. The pattern of society is a closed book to them; man's place in the universe, his function as an animal and as a rational human being, does not move them because they have never even begun to consider it. With no real knowledge, scientific or otherwise, to explain their behavior or that of their fellows, they proceed from day to day, making decisions, operating gadgets, experiencing sensations. The result is the world as we know it—not, as has been pointed out more than once, completely satisfactory from every angle! Our practical governors are men who have learned from experience, but it is not the experience of the race which guides them but that of the small group of which they are a part, the small geographic area in which they can find their way about, the small present they see, and the smaller past they can remember. Dr. Carrel's plan might be worth trying, for even if it meant flying to unknown evils, they could not be much worse than the evils of today.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Issues and Men

Suez Canal Blocked!

(A Great News Beat in Advance)

PORT SAID, November 1, 1935. The Suez Canal is hopelessly blocked—perhaps for weeks to come. Two American merchant ships came into collision while transiting the canal today. Their contact caused a heavy explosion on both ships with the result that they sank instantly, end to end, and have completely blocked the channel. Their names are Mississippi and City of Pueblo. It is said that they were headed for the Italian port of Massaua and that they were laden with explosives for the Italian army. Their situation is such that they have effectively cut the Italian line of communications with Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, and that for the first time England's direct communication with India has been interrupted.

Rome, November 1. In an exclusive interview given to the London *Daily Mail,* Mussolini today denounced the sinking of the American ships in the Suez Canal as a perfidious trick, "dangerously near an act of war," on the part of Great Britain. Il Duce raged up and down his long office like a wounded lion. Said he: "The might of the united Italian people will know how to deal with the authors of this infamous happening. An accident? How preposterous! Only once before has an accident of this kind occurred in the canal. Why should it happen again just now? Let Great Britain and the League explain."

London, November 1. The Foreign Office, the Admiralty, and the London Office of the Suez Canal Company all indignantly denied any knowledge of the Mississippi and the City of Pueblo and hotly resented Mussolini's charge that the British government was concerned with their sinking. The officials of the Foreign Office could not conceal their indignation, for before the report of Mussolini's interview no hint had come to it that the canal disaster was due to collusion or a conspiracy. They could not conceal their feeling that Mussolini's reckless and unfounded charges had brought war between England and Italy much nearer.

Port Said, November 2. What has happened to the crews of the Mississippi and City of Pueblo is not yet clear. Eyewitnesses state that immediately after the collision a motor boat containing only about five or six men left each ship. The explosions took place soon after. The occupants of the boats landed on Egyptian soil and were soon surrounded by a group of natives in the midst of whom they disappeared. Whether any lives were lost is still unknown.

Later. Part of the crews of the Mississippi and Pueblo, about sixty men all told, have been found in Port Said inns. They all claim to be Americans and say they deserted the ships under cover of darkness here because they were afraid of the cargoes. "We had fires aboard while crossing the Atlantic and we were afraid that the ships would blow up," said the first officer of the Pueblo. All of the men are now under arrest. They say the ships sailed from Portland, Maine, bound for Eritrea.

The mystery of the accident has been increased by the copies of the ships' manifests filed with the canal authorities before entering the canal. It would appear that they did not carry explosives but Portland cement. The canal engineers are utterly dismayed. They say that if the water is in the ships' holds, as it must be, the ships are now solid blocks of concrete which it will take months to blast out.

London, November 3. On leaving Buckingham Palace after a long interview with King George, Sir Samuel Hoare, head of the Foreign Office, declared tonight that he had made a full and detailed report of the occurrences in the canal to His Majesty, who was greatly impressed with the gravity of the crisis and filled with indignation at the charge that the blocking of the canal was the act of Englishmen. Speaking for himself, Sir Samuel declared that it seemed to him that nothing could be more ridiculous than to believe that England would deliberately cut her direct communications with India at this time, particularly in view of the alarming excitement among the peoples of India over the Italian attack upon Ethiopia. He added, "We have officially asked the Government of the United States to have the kindness to ascertain who chartered the ships and bought the cement."

Washington, November 3. At the Treasury Department today Secretary Morgenthau indignantly denied the rumor which he declared was put out by the Republican National Committee that he and his father had bought the cement and chartered the ships that blocked the canal. Official inquiry shows that they were chartered by a man named Paul Brown, who paid cash for the charters and the cement, a proceeding that caused comment at the time. After the ships sailed, Mr. Brown, who registered at a local hotel as being from Denver, Colorado, left in his Ford roadster, which had a New York license. The Secret Service reported that there were thirty Paul Browns in Denver and that the G-men will have them all rounded up tonight.

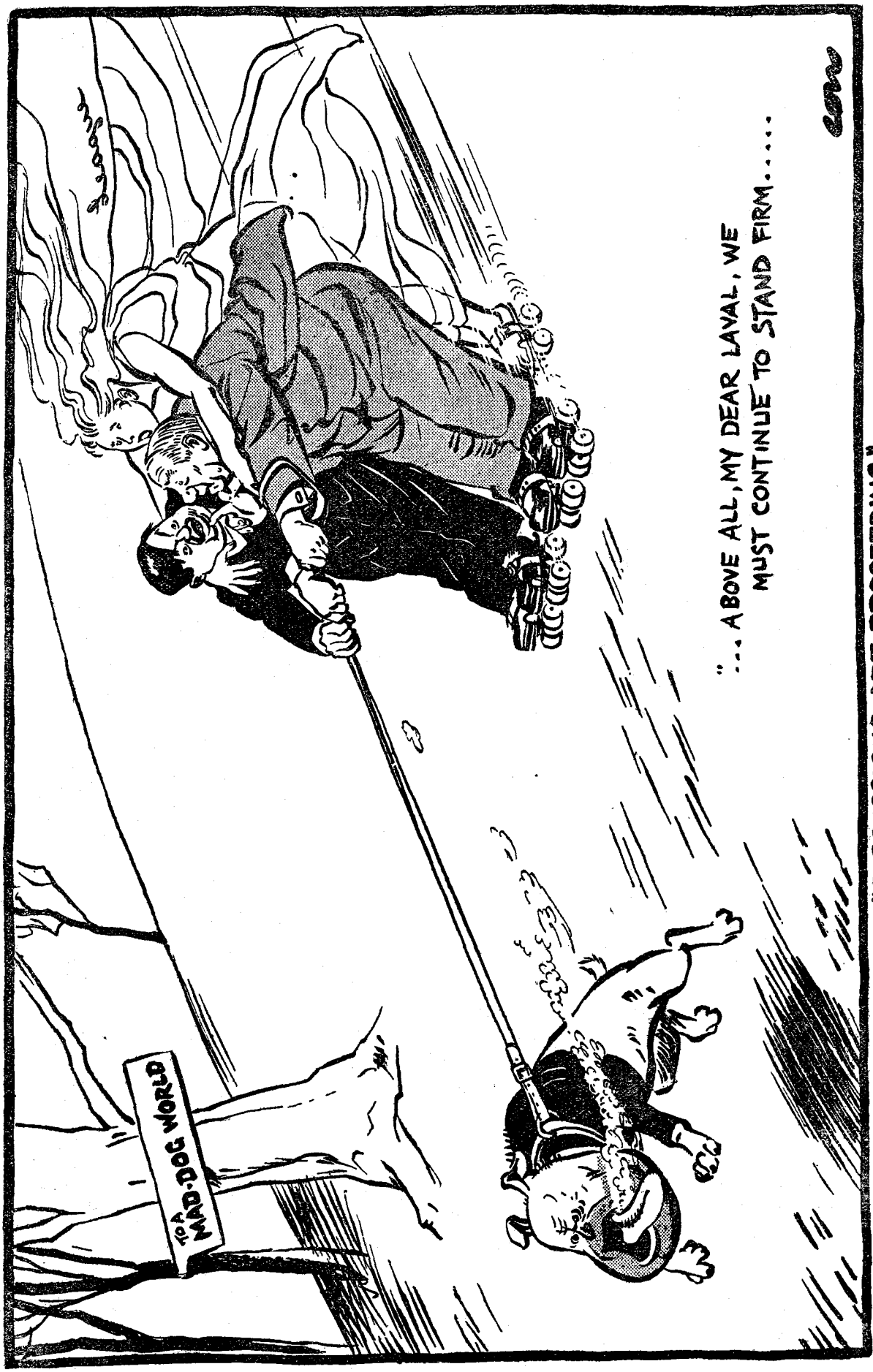
Port Said, November 4. The police have discovered an important piece of evidence. Inside the lining of the cap of a mate of the Pueblo they found a clipping from a faded American newspaper, dated 1899 and reading as follows:

> DEAR MR. CREELMAN: I wish you would at once make preparations so that in case the Spanish fleet actually starts for Manila we can buy some big English steamer at the eastern end of the Mediterranean and take her to some part of the Suez Canal, where we can then sink her and obstruct the passage of the Spanish warships. I understand that if a British vessel were taken into the canal and sunk under the circumstances outlined above, the British government would not allow her to be blown up to clear a passage and it might take time enough to raise her to put Dewey in a safe position. W. R. HEARST

Oswald Garrison Villard

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Cartoon by LOW



Copyright by the Inter-Europa Press

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Supreme Court Aids the Utilities

By GEORGE and SAMUEL SLAFF

THE passage of the Wheeler-Rayburn bill, even with its modified "death-sentence" section, was widely acclaimed as a victory for the public over the utilities. But in the furor over the bill few persons noticed that the Supreme Court had invoked the Fourteenth Amendment once again to save the underlying operating companies from a new and effective method of regulation—a method which would have meant much more to the public than the holding-company bill even in its original form. While the new law will bring about some modification of the superstructure of holding companies, the Supreme Court has greatly reinforced the resistance of the operating companies to rate reductions. On the last decision day of the term the court handed down a decision in the case of West *vs.* the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company of Baltimore City which, if followed to its legalistically logical conclusion by courts and commissions, will practically make it impossible for consumer groups or state commissions to bring utility rates down to a level that even begins to approach the price level of other everyday necessities.

Through a long series of decisions capped by the O'Fallon case in 1929, the utilities had finally succeeded in fixing solidly in the law the principle that "reproduction cost" was the dominant element in the valuation of a company's property for rate-making purposes. They had accomplished this despite the valiant perpetual dissents of Mr. Justice Brandeis and his clear-cut exposition of the "prudent-investment" basis of valuation. However, the court, following its historic policy in utility matters of never definitely committing itself as to the particular methods which must be followed by the state, had never pointed out just how "reproduction cost" was to be determined. As a result, there were but two methods in use for arriving at reproduction cost, neither of which was of any particular aid to the consumers. One was to make an "inventory and appraisal" of the company's property. This, in effect, involves counting every single piece of property owned by the utility down to the last bolt and determining the price for each at the time of the valuation. It is an interminable task, requiring a corps of statisticians and engineers. The New York Public Service Commission, which is as efficient as any public-service commission and more so than most, began in 1930 to make an inventory and appraisal of the property of the Long Island Lighting Company—not an exceptionally large company—and today, five years later, it is still tangled up in the job.

The utilities, of course, welcome this method. It is a marvelous time-consumer, and during all the time consumed they continue to charge the rates previously in effect. But the cost is almost prohibitive as far as commissions are concerned. The Long Island case cost the New York commission $116,000 for the period 1930-34, in addition to the share of the commission's annual $1,000,000 appropriation for running expenses spent on the case. The companies can literally spend millions of dollars—as they do—and be not a penny out of pocket since they can pass the entire cost on to the consumers by charging it all to "operating expenses"—a device which has the benediction of the law. Up to the end of 1933 the Long Island Lighting Company had spent $1,763,974.79 for experts and lawyers engaged on the appraisal, and the total will doubtless run close to $2,500,000. Every cent of this will be reflected in the rates.

The other method of determining "reproduction cost" was to apply to the cost of the company's property as it appeared on the books indices showing the yearly price trend of the different elements which combined to make a going operating utility. This was supposed to show the present-day value of the company's property and of each year's addition to it. Such indices are readily obtainable—there are perhaps a half-dozen standard ones—but they too provide small solace for consumers since they are almost all prepared by engineers who make their living testifying for utility companies. For example, one of these standard indices is known as the Richey Index. This is prepared and kept up to date by Albert S. Richey, who in stating his qualifications as an expert for the company in the recent Public Service Corporation of New Jersey electric-rate case testified: "Since . . . 1905 I have practiced as a consulting engineer almost wholly in public-utility work . . . that practice has been almost wholly with utility companies." Richey also testified for the Public Service Company of Northern Illinois in a rate case initiated by the Illinois commission, and in its decision (May, 1934) the commission said: "As regards 'cost of financing' as defined by Mr. Richey, the courts have repeatedly held . . . that this charge is too conjectural and hypothetical to find any proper place in value for rate-making purposes." One would need the most naive trust in the complete disinterestedness of such experts to imagine that consumers would be aided in any material fashion by the indices turned out by them.

Consumers were thus faced with what seemed to be an inescapable dilemma. And when, after 1929, their incomes were cut almost to the vanishing-point and utility rates continued at substantially pre-depression heights, the pinch became much more severe. There were, however, signs that the attitude of the Supreme Court in utility matters was becoming more liberal and that the public might expect some relief from the court. In the Los Angeles Gas case, decided in 1933, the court spoke of the post-1929 period as "a period of such depression as to constitute 'a new experience to the present generation' . . . a changed economic level," and cited with approval its decision in a case a year earlier in which it had said that the change in economic conditions was "the outstanding contemporary fact, dominating thought and action throughout the country." The court did not stop with words, moreover. It upheld a rate-fixing decision of the California Railroad (Public Service) Commission in which the commission had made no separate allowance for "going-concern value" of the utility. Since the concept of "going-concern value" was one very dear to the hearts of the companies and had always been used to add theoretical millions to the physical value of their properties, this decision was hailed as the beginning of a more advanced point of view.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In 1934 the decision in the Lindheimer case, involving the Illinois Bell Telephone Company, was handed down. In this decision the court, apparently for the first time, recognized as incongruous the utilities' practice of making large annual charges to operating expenses for alleged depreciation expense and piling up huge depreciation reserves, and at the same time in a rate case staunchly maintaining that their physical property was in almost perfect condition and that only a small fraction of their depreciation reserve should be written off the valuation of the property for rate-making purposes. Before this decision the companies had successfully demonstrated that they—in distinction from everyone else—could eat their cake and have it too, without leaving a crumb for the hungry consumer. Now, however, they were forced either to decrease their annual charge for depreciation expense, with consequent lessened justification for their rates, or be faced with a larger deduction for depreciation in a valuation of their properties, with increased justification for lower rates. Again the court demonstrated that its approach to utility problems was a realistic one.

In January, 1935, the Supreme Court decided two cases involving orders of the Ohio Public Utilities Commission. Although the decisions reversed the order of the commission respecting rates which were to apply for a period of five years beginning in April, 1928, it was clear that the court recognized the relation between the economy of the times and the rate of return to be allowed a utility. The implication was overwhelming—much to the horror of the companies—that a return of 5.75 per cent was not to be considered confiscatory, even if it applied retroactively to a period before the depression, and that a rate of approximately 4.50 per cent might well be considered a fair return for a utility company in depression times. Thomas N. McCarter, president of the Edison Institute and of the Public Service of New Jersey, just a few months before had blusteringly informed the New Jersey commission from the witness stand that nothing less than an 8 per cent return would satisfy the requirements of the Constitution and of Public Service of New Jersey. It was not surprising, therefore, that utility executives began to wonder if their old reliable stand-by, the Fourteenth Amendment, was about to turn traitor to them.

Their qualms, however, have apparently been completely quieted by the decision of the Supreme Court—with the vigorous dissent of Justices Stone, Brandeis, and Cardozo—in the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone case. That case arose out of the fact that the Maryland Public Service Commission, convinced, as it stated in its decision, "that, in view of the general decline in value of all property, the public was entitled to a reduction in the rates charged by utilities generally and that such reductions should be based on the value of utility properties at present-day prices," had initiated in January, 1933, a rate case against the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company of Baltimore City. According to the commission's opinion, "both the company and the commission realized that to attempt to find the present-day fair value of the company's property by the usual method of taking an inventory of all items of property owned by the company and pricing out these items at present-day prices [the "inventory-and-appraisal" method referred to above] would not only take at least two years of constant work but would cost the company not less than $300,000 and cost the state a very substantial sum. It was agreed that index numbers should be used in arriving at present-day costs." The commission, however, was sufficiently informed to realize that if it had to depend on the usual "standard" utility indices alone, it might just as well save its time and effort, for from these quarters would come no relief of any consequence for the consumers. It also felt that there was a decided connection between the purchasing power of money and the rates to be charged by a utility.

It therefore assembled sixteen indices, chief among which was the United States Department of Labor Index of Wholesale Commodity Prices, admittedly the most accurate reflector of purchasing power we have, but which included as well several of the "standard" utility-construction indices. The Index of Wholesale Commodity Prices, prepared and kept up to date by the Department of Labor, covers the fluctuations in prices of some 800 different commodities, representing every possible type of commodity which enters into the life of the individual. It shows accurately the purchasing power of money at any given time compared with any year since 1913, when the index was first begun. Its importance in utility valuation for rate-making purposes lies in the fact that the utility investor is, according to the law of the land, entitled to—and practically guaranteed—a "fair return," and this index can measure with substantial accuracy what his return in dollars means in terms of his purchasing power.

Also included were the Interstate Commerce Commission Index of Telephone and Telegraph Line Prices, a special index of Baltimore wages prepared by the commission's staff, and an index based upon actual prices paid by the company to the Western Electric Company, its co-subsidiary of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, for materials furnished to it. The commission thereupon proceeded to "weight" these indices according to their relative importance, giving to the Labor Department Index of Wholesale Commodity Prices a "weight" of 4, to the I. C. C. Index of Telephone and Telegraph Line Prices a weight of 3, to the index reflecting prices paid by the company to Western Electric a weight of 3, to the Baltimore wages index a weight of 1.5, and so on. It thus arrived at a composite index which it proceeded to apply to the value of the company's property as it had been previously determined by the commission in 1923 and to the cost of the annual additions since that time.

As the commission stated, these indices and the final composite weighted index revealed "(1) present fair value, (2) reproduction cost, and (3) the purchasing power of income." It was a realistic, rational method of correlating economic actualities with utility rates. Substantially the same method was successfully used by Dr. John Bauer, expert for the consumers, in the Public Service of New Jersey case, except that Dr. Bauer, in relying solely on the Labor Department Index, was even more advanced than the Maryland Commission. By its technique the Maryland Commission did away with the involved, tortuous processes of the usual rate case—hearings were begun in May, 1933, and the case submitted to the commission for decision in September of the same year; it did away with complete reliance on utility indices; it introduced impartial indices into utility valuation; and it recognized the importance of actual purchasing power. The result was that the commission found the value of the company's property to be $32,621,190—in contrast to the company's claim of a valuation of $46,351,119—

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

allowed 6 per cent as the rate of return, and ordered a reduction in rates of $1,000,000 annually.

Here, at last, by the introduction of indices other than the old-line utility indices, was a means of achieving some measure of justice for consumers, while at the same time recognizing the legitimate rights of utility investors. It was a profoundly important advance in rate-making. However, when the Supreme Court handed down its decision on June 3, 1935, reversing the order of the commission, the majority, speaking through Mr. Justice Roberts, after solemnly pointing out that "the established principle is that as the due-process clauses [Amendments V and XIV] safeguard private property against a taking for public use without just compensation, neither nation nor state may require the use of privately owned property without just compensation," proceeded, much to the relief of jittery utility magnates, to restore everything to its previous happy state by the unusually broad statement that "the method [of the commission] was inapt and improper, is not calculated to obtain a fair or accurate result, and should not be employed in the valuation of utility plants for rate-making purposes."

To say that the decision is a tremendous setback in the perpetual battle for decent utility rates is a mild euphemism. While the Labor Department Index of Wholesale Commodity Prices dropped precipitately after 1929 to a level lower than in 1913 (64.8 for the year 1932), the Handy Index, a "standard" utility index, was well over 90 for 1932, and well over 95 in January, 1934, when the Labor Department Index stood at 72.2. Yet state commissions in the future will be compelled to rely on one of the standard indices or become involved in "inventory and appraisal."

The minority opinion, written by Mr. Justice Stone, vigorously pointed out that the public was entitled to as much protection in depression times as the utilities received in boom days, observing that "historical cost appropriately adjusted by reasonable recognition of price trends appears to be quite as common-sense a method of arrival at a present theoretical value as any other. For a period of twenty years or more of rising prices, commissions and courts, including this one, have regarded price variations as persuasive evidence that present fair value was more than cost. I see no reason for concluding that they are of less weight in times of declining prices."

The majority decision, however, with Chief Justice Hughes and Mr. Justice Roberts coming to the aid of the traditional conservatives of the bench, apparently failed to see any connection between the consumer's much-reduced income and utility rates. It likewise refused to recognize the significance of the fact that today every dollar of the utility investor's return has a purchasing power approximately 25 per cent higher than its pre-depression purchasing power.

The outlook for the consumers is a gloomy one. They are evidently once again restricted to the old-line methods by which they have futilely pursued the will-o'-the-wisp of lower rates for so many disillusioning years. Their chief hope is that other commissions will not be deterred by the decision from finding the "fair value" of utility properties by the application of the U. S. L. D. Index of Wholesale Commodity Prices—a precise point upon which the court did not directly rule. At this moment, however, there is little prospect that their utility bills will be reduced materially in the near future.

The Price of the Hopkins Victory

By RAYMOND GRAM SWING

Washington, September 23

HARDLY anyone in Washington is happy about the victory of Mr. Hopkins over Mr. Ickes. Quite aside from personal predilections, the prevailing view is that the President has pursued a line which has now landed him in a first-class mess, economically, politically, and socially. What bound him to Mr. Hopkins is that severest of masters, a foolhardy promise. Solemnly he told the country that by the end of this year he would remove 3,500,000 persons from relief and put them into useful work. At the time of this pledge he believed it would be easy to keep. So did Mr. Hopkins. It appeared to be dependent on a single consideration, administrative talent, and Mr. Hopkins could be sure of his gifts and the President could be sure of Mr. Hopkins. When the promise was made both the President and Mr. Hopkins were distressed over the effects of relief, and dreaded its becoming a permanent prop in the social structure. They saw that it was deteriorating the country's most precious resource, human beings. Nobody is going to doubt their sincerity. Two years had been frittered away on vast public spending with disappointing results. Congress was not in a mood to vote astronomical sums annually for idle persons, and there had to be a turning into a new road. Mr. Hopkins formulated the new objective, to "purge" the relief rolls. He believed he would be able to create enough work of a useful kind and to do it with the dispatch which Mr. Ickes had not demonstrated. So the $4,000,000,000 fund of 1935 was divided, first of all, to give Mr. Hopkins control over much the larger share, Mr. Ickes being left with the $900,000,000 allotted him by Congress. The President had not given up public works altogether, but they were slow, and they would not contribute directly to the "purge" of the relief rolls.

Probably the Hopkins scheme never could have succeeded. The relief rolls are not a cross-section of American labor, but rather a sediment. They contain more of the casualties of the depression than the unemployed not on relief. It is doubtful whether they number enough skilled men, able and fit to work, to carry out a vast program of public works, no matter how wisely administered. But whether or not the task was impossible under any conditions, it was made so by two decisions of policy. The first was by the President: he promised to pay a "security" wage on relief projects instead of the prevailing wage. The second was by Mr. Hopkins: projects would be selected for their low material cost.

At the time the security wage was first broached it was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not what it has since become. The President's mind was full of an interesting and vital plan, to strike a blow at uneconomical high wage rates and to substitute for them a higher annual income. The idea was attractive, and promised, among other things, to rid the building industry of one of the chief obstructions to revival. The President conceived of the security wage as one which was somewhat lower than the prevailing wage, the difference to be counted as an insurance premium which a man paid for steady employment. This was spoken about at the time, but in the succeeding months it has been utterly forgotten. The security wage has come to be simply a relief payment which has to be worked for. Mr. Hopkins already had two million relief recipients on labor of one sort or another. Their status has changed in two particulars—they receive the somewhat better rates of the present set-up, and they are under the WPA instead of the FERA.

Thus has the problem been simplified as to wages. It has been simplified in another fatal respect. Mr. Hopkins took his appropriation and divided it by the 3,500,000 who had to be put to work to keep the President's pledge. And thereby he arrived at the figure of $1,040 per man-year, which could not be exceeded by any project. Subsequent calculations might make this figure even lower. Public works by long division, this can be called. The moment this method of calculation was adopted, Mr. Hopkins was forced to select projects using much labor and little material. He then could not go in for the construction on a large scale of capital assets, which the country would possess in return for its heavy outlays during the emergency. Obviously he had more or less to invent occupations for idle persons. This he is doing. And Washington is flooded with foreboding reports of the consequences. Workers on relief projects themselves are disgusted with many of the Hopkins-made jobs. They see how wasteful they are, how inefficiently managed, how degrading, and in essence how insulting. Cash relief may have been demoralizing, but it was better than mock work, obviously required of a man "for his own good." Much of the Hopkins program does not merit this criticism. But much of it does. And now that Hopkins will spend not only his share of the four billions but part of Mr. Ickes's money, there will be more such jobs, and there will be a rising tide of disgust.

The long-division method of selecting projects is foolish for two reasons. It leaves out of account the secondary effect of public works in creating employment. If a project uses much material it will spread the impetus of employment into many fields. For every man employed at least one, perhaps one and a half, perhaps two, possibly even three more men find work. If only those projects are chosen which require little material the secondary effect is correspondingly less. It may make sense on paper to say that Mr. Hopkins with his type of projects is employing more men than Mr. Ickes. In fact, he employs far fewer men. But Mr. Hopkins is not bothered, because his men come off relief rolls while most of Mr. Ickes's don't.

The second foolishness of the long-division method is that it leads to padding the labor requirements of projects. A job, normally reckoned, may need a hundred men, but at this figure it may work out to a man-year cost above $1,040. One need only add another hundred men arbitrarily to cut the man-year cost in half. The second hundred men may clutter up the job and produce hopeless inefficiency, but they make it possible for Mr. Hopkins to spend the money —and "purge" the rolls. This padding is going on all over the country. No matter how unethical it is or how glaringly it wastes public funds, once the long-division method has been adopted, padding becomes inevitable.

Attention has already been drawn in *The Nation* to the Alice in Wonderland spectacle of Mr. Hopkins bidding against Mr. Ickes for public-works projects. The Administration having decided that public works and work relief should live side by side, they were set in competition with each other. Mr. Hopkins had to land a certain proportion of sound public-works projects; otherwise there was something real in the cry of "boondoggling." So he went out into Mr. Ickes's market-place crying his wares. He couldn't promise to do as good work as Mr. Ickes, but he virtually gave his goods away. Mr. Ickes offered a dollar value for fifty-five cents, and it was a genuine dollar value. Mr. Hopkins offered a dollar value for five cents, two cents, or even nothing, but his dollar value wasn't reliable. That is, Mr. Ickes builds only if the local community puts up 55 per cent of the cost. Mr. Hopkins is ready to charge the entire bill to the federal taxpayer.

Mr. Ickes, in the meantime, was drumming up business with the expectation of spending his $900,000,000, inducing local communities to spend another $1,100,000,000, and thus giving the country a two-billion-dollar public-works program. Despite the Hopkins competition, he succeeded in filling his books. He found local communities which were ready to raise their share, and most of them went through the preliminaries to do so. But when the Ickes-Hopkins controversy went to Hyde Park this month, Mr. Hopkins had rejected more than a thousand of these projects because the man-year cost was too great. The President thereupon backed up Mr. Hopkins. He reduced to a third the $900,000,000 which Congress had allotted to public works, and the money now will be spent by Mr. Hopkins instead. In so doing he gave offense to every community which wanted an Ickes project and now is not to have it. And as in every instance local communities are governed by politicians, these have been affronted to an extent which is worrying Mr. Farley. The President's spending program is making enemies among both groups which ought to be its most ardent friends. Recipients of relief work are increasingly critical, and communities which hoped to add to their permanent capital assets are disappointed.

To recapitulate, the spending program is making enemies instead of friends, which is bad politically. It is spending federal funds on a 100 per cent basis instead of a 45 per cent, and on projects which do not have much effect in stimulating indirect employment. This is bad economically. It is aimed only at finding work for those already on relief; hence is a clear invitation to all the unemployed not on relief to get on the rolls if they want any benefit. And this is bad socially.

But there is still a further reason why the policy is unpopular in Washington. It is changing the country's conception of public works. The difference between the Public Works Administration and the Works Progress Administration appears to the uninstructed as a transference of only two letters. PWA and WPA are virtually the same. The country believes the New Deal has a public-works pro-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gram. It also believes that a public-works program is wasteful, and that it is ineffectual as a means to recovery.

As a matter of fact, the trial of public works as a means to recovery has never been made in this country. We have spent billions; we loosely call the objects of expenditure public works. The NRA was originally sold to the public as a public-works program, of which self-government in industry was only a part. But of the $3,300,000,000 appropriated in the Recovery Act, to which $400,000,000 was added, only $934,000,000 was spent on non-federal projects by the PWA. And of this sum the greater part, or $725,000,000, was lent, not given away. Local communities spent, over and above their loans, $270,000,000 on these projects. So that the total genuine PWA program, before the present four-billion program was developed, was $1,213,000,000. And this cost federal taxpayers about $218,000,000, assuming that all loans are repaid. In addition certain federal projects must be considered genuine public works, for which the taxpayer footed the entire bill. Included in these are $400,000,000 for roads, $40,000,000 for forests, $105,000,000 for construction of dams and similar construction by the Interior Department, $346,405,000 for river and harbor improvements and flood control administered by the army, and $44,000,000 for post-office buildings. Some of these federal projects have been carried out regardless of the depression, and it is difficult to compile a figure which represents accurately the attempt of the New Deal to cope with unemployment and the depression by public works. But the total outlay on public works, whether by the PWA or other departments, was less than two-and-a-quarter billions, in over two years, and the cost to taxpayers was about half this amount, or $1,153,000,000. If, instead, we had spent six billions or, as some experts advised, eight or ten billions, we might today have been riding the crest of recovery without the cost to taxpayers being much greater than it is.

The Administration's policy is not like some of its other follies, which can be forgiven because of the real difficulties to be surmounted. When the President fails to induce a reactionary Congress to pass all his reform measures, and he has to snip and whittle from them to get them through, one may regret the necessity, or even doubt the advisability of compromise. But one recognizes that every battle cannot be won. Similarly when the President is confronted by a defiant business commmunity, and decides that discretion is the better part of valor, criticism of compromise must necessarily be tempered. But Congress believed in public works, and the business community prayed for them. There never was any opposition to them on any front. The business community disliked the TVA and municipal power plants, but for a year it repeated in a chorus that the only hope for recovery was to stimulate the heavy industries. The difficulties in the way of public works have lain in the President's mind first of all, and to these he has added paralyzing strictures such as the security wage and the long-division method. These have not been errors of tactics but sheer economic incompetence.

A great danger now is that public works are so discredited in the mind of the average man that he may not be ready for orderly and constructive planning, by which a great public-works program remains ready to be expanded or contracted as the cycle of private business rises or falls. And without that reserve of public works the capitalist system may not be able to ride the cycles without going into deeper and still deeper depressions. The New Deal has missed making perhaps the simplest contribution it had to offer to its generation, a demonstration of intelligent control in an industrial civilization.

Sharing Vice and Votes

By CARLETON BEALS

HUEY P. LONG of Winn Parish, Louisiana, was raised a Baptist. His mother, Caledonia Long, made him attend Sunday School, morning and evening services, young people's league, Wednesday-night prayer meeting, every funeral within ten miles, and all the week-long revival meetings in improvised tabernacles among the loblolly pines. He became the greatest "Cain killed Abel . . . Go thou and do likewise" Bible quoter in America. And his message was frequently tinged with those bucolic utopian visions of fat herds which are scattered here and there in the Good Book.

In upstate Louisiana Bible quotations plus promises of an economic Utopia were sufficient to corral the votes of the people of what is the second or third most illiterate state in the Union. But New Orleans was a different nut to crack. And New Orleans, crossroads of the world, once the second port of the country, a place of great financial concentration, ran most of the politics of the state.

In New Orleans the Negroes are the religious folk. Though only a third of the population and in miserable circumstances, they own more than half the churches. But they have no vote. The whites, largely Catholic, are not good subjects for Protestant emotional revivalism. In addition New Orleans has always been one of the most corrupt cities in America. Its red-light district was long second only to the Barbary Coast, and the vice elements had even more political power than in San Francisco. In the good old days when the more enterprising brothels advertised with electric signs—"Mamie's" or "Magdalene's"—the police and politician rake-off was said to be at least $2,000,000 a year, a big item in a city whose tax returns were only about $5,000,000. Quite as important were the votes controlled, directly about 9,000, indirectly perhaps five times as many. The stock saying was that the vice crowd voted the St. Louis cemetery. Besides prostitution and gambling, another form of corruption was the lottery, offspring of carpetbag days. The famous *Times Picayune* began as the official organ of the Louisiana Lottery Company and ever since has been closely identified with "Old Ring" politics.

Founded upon these evil conditions, and allied with fruit and steamship companies, the Cotton Exchange, and the banks, the Old Ring under Martin Beherman had held

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

unshakable power for more than thirty years. The official quarters of the Old Regular Democrats is the ancient two-story building on the corner of Lafayette Square, the Choctaw Club—an old landmark with its slightly sagging balconies, white paint, green shutters, and iron grills. Ever since the carpetbaggers and scalawags were run out of office after a pitched battle between the citizens' committee and the Negro police, the Choctaw Club, embracing the so-called "better elements," has ruled for the most part with undisputed sway. There distinguished visitors are entertained. There the fat matrons of a hot city maintain their unquenchable Mardi Gras spirit by bedecking themselves in chaplets of Indian feathers to la-la-la the praises of returning Senators and to rally behind Old Glory (secretly wishing it were the flag of the Confederacy) in memory of Iberville and Bienville. But the informal rendezvous for decades has been Stuber's saloon or Lulu White's dive down on Basin Street in the bowels of the red-light district, known to polite folks as Storeyville. In Stuber's the gangsters, criminals, and ward heelers were paid off. There, over absinthe or mint juleps, the bosses divided the swag, whispered about contracts, new school sites, jobs. In the petite gilded ballroom at Lulu's almost any night men influential in city politics could be seen along with gay young dogs frolicking with the half-clad girls, white and octaroon, dancing to the syncopated music of the baby grand hammered by big black Lulu's latest white paramour, and waiting for the midnight "circus," a nude debauchery famous half around the world.

With the cracking down on vice during the World War and later during the temporary pesudo-reform McShane administration, the ranks of the Old Ring and the vice elements became divided into the O'Keefe faction, the Walmsley faction, the Maloney faction, and, more or less apart, the New Regulars, led by John P. Sullivan, corporation lawyer, racetrack and gambling king, now recipient of federal patronage. In his unsuccessful campaign for the governorship in 1923-24 Long had tied up with the Independent Regulars, led by the two Catholic brothers Francis and Gus Williams, a relatively clean outfit. In the next campaign, 1927-28, he double-crossed the Williamses and lined up with the Sullivan New Regulars. Four years before he had said that both Sullivan and Old Ring Beherman were dictated to by the big interests. "Wall Street knows how to call them in and make them sleep in the same bed. . . If Beherman took a dose of laudanum, Sullivan would get sleepy in ten minutes." Huey now lay down in the same bed, and the *Times Picayune* at once caricatured the "Sullivan gambling interests" holding up a hot-air cushion on which was triumphantly poised snub-nosed Huey, brandishing "Muck" and "Bunk." Huey's campaign manager, Ellis, promptly resigned: Sullivan stood for three things, "racing, gambling, and whiskey"; with his support Huey could not give a clean or progressive administration.

To Huey's opening campaign meeting in Alexandria the Sullivan gambling crowd and a few Old Ring renegades ran a special train with 600 henchmen to shout for Huey. At subsequent meetings Sullivan could be seen busily checking up to see that his gang were all present.

But Huey, elected, was determined to be no mere puppet, and soon took drastic steps to get his own hands directly on the vice and corporation levers. He decided to call out the National Guard, despite the constitutional restriction, and raid gambling—a spectacular play for the hill-billies, the upstate Baptists, and the local moralists, designed to give the lie to the constant accusation that he was protecting Sullivan's gambling interests while whipping vote-controlling underworld elements into line.

The dice were clicking merrily and the roulette wheels flashing round day and night. In the Jai Alai Fronton and the Arabai Club on Friscoville Avenue in St. Bernard Parish, women and girls were thick at the tables. There were newspaper exposés, business protests.

After mollifying Sullivan by Levee Board and Jury Commission patronage, Long reached New Orleans late Saturday night, August 11, 1928, and imperiously ordered out the militia. Colonel E. P. Roy rose to Ciceronian eloquence, telling the boys to shoot without hesitation. "We are to deal with most desperate men. Remember you are soldiers and that you are engaged in a serious business for state and country. You are to enforce its laws [by breaking others]." At 1:30 in the morning armed uniformed members of the Headquarters Troop of the 108th Cavalry and Washington Artillery, Battery A, of the National Guard descended on the Arabai Club. The "desperate" lookout man, though armed with Springfield rifle, shotgun, and revolver, tamely submitted to arrest. Some 500 patrons were swarming about the tables in a bedlam. As the armed troopers crashed in, the patrons crowded to the exits. Rifles barred their way. The *Times Picayune* staff photographer, Neil Simes, was beaten up and had to be taken to the Presbyterian Hospital. More than $15,000 was seized on the tables and all paraphernalia was taken to Jackson barracks and burned. The onslaught on the Fronton was similar. To the press Long announced: "Gambling is halted in St. Bernard Parish. It's going to remain closed while I'm Governor." For several weeks there was not even an echo of a croupier's call.

In November Long, delighted with his new-found toy, the militia, again raided the dens, this time in Jefferson Parish. Once more he first mollified Sullivan by appointing him head of the New Orleans election supervisors. This time Battery B had its chance for glory. The national guardsmen swept down on Beverly Gardens, Metrairie Inn, and Fargo Grocery Store. In the last-named, where the patrons were in evening dress, $12,000 was found. Again the troopers made a merry bonfire.

The press was outraged by Long's use of the militia without the request of the civil authorities. Attorney General Percy Saint held star sessions with National Guard officers behind closed doors in the Civil Courts building, then accused Long of suppressing evidence instead of suppressing gambling, thus preventing proper prosecution. What right did Long have to make private deals with the gamblers? There was "no excuse for compromising with the violators of the law as Long had done." He was merely "playing to the galleries . . . a cheap boosting of cave-man methods."

In February Huey ordered new raids. On the eighth and thirteenth the militia swooped down on Rudy O'Dwyre's original Shreveport Club (said to have been even then protected by Long). In one drive $25,000 was found. But this time the guardsmen were careful to burn only old, worthless equipment.

On the evening of the thirteenth Huey dined with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

friends, then went to a party in the Vieux Carré at the "studio" of Alfred Danziger, head of the Young Men's Business Club. Huey became intoxicated, it was later testified, and indiscreetly gave out information which apparently resulted in a tip-off to the gamblers. In his hotel later that night Huey kept posted on the raids by telephone. Angered that the gamblers had got under cover, he dictatorially ordered that every guest be searched for chips or other evidence. Most of them submitted tamely, but Mr. and Mrs. Fred P. Kriss flatly refused. Huey ordered them held all night in Jackson barracks. Forcibly searched in the morning, they were found free of incriminating evidence. Next day New Orleans was in an uproar. The press wept crocodile tears over the outrages suffered by the patrons. One woman claimed a guardsman had stolen her $500 purse. Huey loudly defended the honor of the Guard.

Colonel Robert Ewing's *Daily States* published the Krisses' pictures, commiserated them on their "martyrdom," and called Huey "the boon companion of indicted criminals, a chronic distorter of the facts, a habitual double-crosser, a traducer of character, a beneficiary of funds contributed by gamblers, a tyrant suffering from delusions of grandeur, and the singing fool of the New Orleans cabarets." Huey gave the press a police "mug" of Kriss and declared he was being attacked by a spokesman of gamblers and a friend of murderers and habitues of rogues' galleries; he demanded that Ewing resign as Democratic national committeeman.

Thus broke up Huey's alliance with the New Regulars. The Sullivanites, except those who declared openly for Huey, were kicked out of all their jobs. Sullivan and Ewing tried to scurry back to the Old Ring. Huey loudly denounced the merger.

By these raids and other maneuvers Huey was able to set up strong sub-dictatorships. Some of them ever since have returned more votes than the entire adult population. These tactics added greatly to Huey's spoils, gave much new patronage, and broke Old Ring control over several Congressional districts. If gambling flourishes in those parishes today, it is because Huey was willing for it to flourish. Except for short periods—and this to further his political plans—the dens there have stayed open from that day to this. Last March I was in the New Keno Palace, a gambling hall and lottery joint belonging to Freddy Rickerford, on a drawing night. Roulette and faro tables were going full blast, and the place was jammed with vendors waiting for pay-off. Rickerford, a big fellow in a Texas Stetson—an old-style gambler, "all bets on the barrel-head"—strode in with a gang of armed retainers. In April the joints were temporarily closed while Huey made militia drives to intimidate the federal-patronage boys and thus indirectly Judge Wayne Borah's court, which had taken over supervision of New Orleans finances, and the court of Judge Caige, a Negro-baiting Old Ring boss who was trying to block Huey's control of the police and fire departments. I went out to call on Rudy O'Dwyre and caught a glimpse of his atrociously gaudy home before being escorted off the premises by a polite Negro servant and a scowling gunman. A few days later I talked with one of Rudy's men in town. "Long is making it hot for you again, I see," I remarked.

"Now look here, sonny, we ain't got nothin' against the Senator. He treats us square."

A few months later Huey was saying over the radio—and the dens were once more wide open in his parishes—"If you folk down here are just born gamblers, I guess there's nothing I can do to stop you."

The enemy citadel was still the unconquered political machine of New Orleans. While at times Huey had had support there, for instance, from the Paul Maloney faction, he never got very far until 1932 when, to put O. K. Allen across as puppet governor, he patched up an alliance with the gang—Mayor Walmsley was on the spot for minor scandals, the city's finances were again in rotten shape, the country had hit the nadir of depression, even vice didn't pay. It was amusing then to see the politicians who hated Long, who in their own day of power had blithely accepted Old Ring support, come out in horrified tones about Huey's dirty machine alliance. Ex-Governor Parker, who had had exactly the same alliance, was particularly upset. "Do you intend by your votes," he harangued for two days over the radio, "to set the tiny feet of your children on the path that he [Long] has trod?"

The following year the Walmsley-Long alliance broke down and Huey in New Orleans took the licking of his life. He thereupon moved in upon this last citadel of opposition and repeated the tactics toward the underworld that had already given him absolute power in adjacent parishes. At a special legislative session a law was passed providing for a special vice investigation. Three weeks before election day Huey moved Hitler-like on the Crescent City with his National Guard, highway police, and state cossacks, the Bureau of Criminal Identification. The boys in uniform guarded his palatial home and sat in the office of the registrar of voters. Walmsley's special deputies squatted behind machine-guns across the way in the City Hall.

For three weeks the investigation commission pried into New Orleans vice; the news was blared into loud speakers throughout the city. As special prosecutor Huey artistically and profanely besmirched the Old Ring candidates, the Supreme Court, and the hostile Public Service Commission. While he was thus denouncing vice, his henchmen were promising the gang that if they got right, the investigation would be dropped after elections. They got right, and Huey's candidates went in with big majorities.

To make effective his new law taking over the police and fire departments in New Orleans, Huey staged new vice raids in the spring. The vice elements learned they would have no peace until they got 100 per cent right. Not even the efforts of the federal government, using its patronage and relief funds, to dust off the discredited Sullivan gambling crowd or its assistance to Walmsley and those doubtful elements whom Huey justly called "the Roosevelt boodle brigade in Louisiana" caused Huey to lose his grip on underworld finances and votes.

It has been an amusing spectacle recently to watch the changed roll of Walmsley, who has been mopping up on the vice elements which went into Long's camp and is now posing as a moralist himself. Neither Walmsley nor Sullivan is interested in ending vice or the rake-off system. It is just a sordid struggle for power. And if what happened in St. Bernard and Jefferson parishes was a sample, the underworld, with Walmsley out, would have had nothing to fear from the Baptist Kingfish. It will have even less to fear now that he is dead, and that the Old Ring is regaining control.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Decline and Fall of French Fascism

By EMIL LENGYEL

Paris, September 15

NOT since the foundation of the Third Republic has a movement so swept France from the Ardennes to the Pyrenees as has the Front Populaire of all anti-fascists. Fascism, if it ever had a chance, has suffered a defeat which has already had resounding effects.

It was the French Front Populaire that induced the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in Moscow to pass the resolution calling upon all Communists to cooperate with Socialists and democrats in combating the fascist danger. As a result of the Comintern's action plans are already on foot to realize the common front of all anti-fascists irrespective of party affiliations. In certain regions of Germany the underground Socialist and Communist movements have already united, although the Socialist leaders in Prague still hold out against a general linking of the Marxian forces. Wilhelm Pieck, erstwhile leader of the Communist faction in the last Prussian Landtag, strengthened his arguments in his report to the Comintern by declaring that if such a union had been accomplished three years ago Adolf Hitler would not be in power today.

Immediately after the disorders of February 6, 1934, French Socialists and Communists formed a united front against fascist terror in the streets and against the threat of fascist control of the Chamber of Deputies. Although this union worked fairly well, it was felt that final victory could be assured only by finding a broader basis for all anti-fascist forces. The idea took root in the uncongenial soil of the elegant Fifth Arrondissement of Paris. It was presented by a committee of anti-fascist intellectuals who were successful in forming the nucleus of a Front Populaire of all liberals and Marxians by obtaining the cooperation of about two score district party offices.

This experiment was an instant success, and its proponents took the unusual step of inviting the leaders of all important left-wing parties to realize a similar union on a national scale. The invitation was accepted, and on the evening of June 28 the Palais de la Mutualité witnessed the unusual spectacle of Edouard Daladier, twice Prime Minister of France and leader of the left-wing of the largest party in the Chamber, the Radical Socialist Party, exchanging compliments with his most dangerous enemies in past years: Léon Blum, leader of the second largest party in the Chamber, the S. F. I. O., the French section of the Labor and Socialist International; and Maurice Thorez, spokesman of the Communists. That evening the Front Populaire was born. Its members pledged themselves to defend their rights against fascism and to work for a lasting peace.

The Paris *grande presse,* whose connections with some of the near-fascist organizations and their financial backers, the heavy industries, are well known, either ignored or ridiculed the rally at the Mutualité. Some of them, however, trained their guns on Daladier for what they described as treason to law and order and the bourgeoisie.

Not even the most optimistic prophets could foresee what fruits that rally would bear, and what a deeply felt need it would express. The test of its suddenly developed strength was the mass demonstration on Bastille Day, July 14. Never in its history has the population of Paris responded to a political call in such vast numbers. The organizers of the demonstration estimated the left-wing adherents who streamed from the Place de la Bastille toward Vincennes at about half a million. It was a delirious crowd which by its spontaneous action stamped the Front Populaire with success. Bourgeois fraternized with Communists, peasants joined hands with intellectuals, the French tricolor waved at the side of the red flag, and the band played the "Marseillaise" and "Internationale" alternately. Communists were heard shouting: "Daladier to power!"

The broad basis of the movement may be seen from the list of the organizations that took part in the demonstration: Radical Socialists, S. F. I. O., Communists, Republican Socialists, French Socialists, Socialists of France, National Syndicate of Teachers, National Peasant Confederation, Peasants of France, Red Republicans, League for the Rights of Man, Anti-Fascist Intellectuals, International Red Aid, International League of the Combatants of Peace, League of Women Intellectuals, Pacifist Youth, Free Thinkers of France, Revolutionary Free Masons, Revolutionary Cooperative Societies, Autonomous Federation of Public Officials, Federation of the Tenants of the Paris Region. Commenting upon the demonstration, Léon Blum wrote in the *Populaire,* "Today a new phase begins in history."

Overnight the Front Populaire became the most important political movement of France. The next task was to construct a platform that was strong enough to support so many parties. The temporary program which the Front Populaire adopted demanded the immediate disarming and dissolution of the armed fascist leagues and called upon the government to conclude mutual-assistance pacts on the pattern of the Franco-Soviet treaty, to be followed by general disarmament, and to prohibit the private manufacture and sale of arms. It also demanded that the feudal power of the Bank of France be ended, that trusts, banks, and large fortunes be controlled, and that strict measures be applied against fiscal frauds. The last point of the program demanded large-scale public works, a forty-hour week, and the end of the policy of deflation.

Since July 14 a commission has been at work on a more ambitious plan which, according to forecasts, will include a provision for the nationalization of credit and the key industries, and the establishment of a Supreme Economic Council, under labor control, to coordinate the economic activities of the state. The acceptance of this plan by the Radical Socialists of the Front Populaire will in itself be a revolutionary act, since that party has never subscribed to such a program.

The Front has a permanent parliamentary committee intrusted with keeping an eye on the government while the Chamber is on vacation. The Front is responsible for the declared intention of the Republican Socialist Party, the Socialist Party of France, and the French Socialist Party—

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

none of which is to be confused with the powerful S. F. I. O., or "big" Socialist Party—to merge into one organization. Tentative plans have also been made to bring the Socialist and Communist trade unions closer together. The Front has won three notable electoral victories in the last few weeks by concentrating on the defeat of reactionary candidates. It is particularly strong in the south of France, the stronghold of the left wing.

The man against whom the Front Populaire is largely directed is probably the most-talked-of person in France today —ex-Lieutenant-Colonel Marquis François de la Rocque, head of the Croix de Feu. It was he whom the hundreds of thousands of Bastille Day demonstrators accused in a new version of the old Carmagnole: "The Marquis de la Rocque wants to rob us of our freedom."

Originally an organization of decorated World War veterans, the Croix de Feu has become the largest reactionary political organization in France, claiming a membership of some 300,000 persons. It is the most important among the movements that the Front Populaire considers fascist, and it is spreading at the expense of smaller organizations with similar political creeds. On Bastile Day Colonel de la Rocque marched with some 30,000 men to the tomb of the unknown soldier in the shadow of the Arc de Triomphe. The charge was made before the parliamentary commission which investigated the background of the troubles on February 6 that the Colonel's men are armed. Leaders of the Front Populaire have repeatedly asserted that the Croix de Feu has also tanks and airplanes, which, however, the Colonel denies.

De la Rocque is a military man from top to toe, with little of that political acumen that Mussolini displayed on reaching power. He saw nine years of military service in the African possessions of France. Wounded in an encounter with native forces during the World War, he asked to be sent to the Western front instead of the hospital. After the war he was assigned to the staff of Marshal Foch, was sent on a military mission to Poland, fought Abd-el-Krim in Morocco, and was transferred again to the staff of Foch. About seven years ago he resigned from service.

The program of De la Rocque consists of such generalities as "order, work, family, fatherland." Asked about his plans, he said to an interviewer: "Programs are deceptive. . . . There are too many ready-made ideas and doctrines in this world." In his speech at Mouvaix, near Tourcoing, on July 7 he came nearer to being specific: "Our first task is to create order, to take full command, and cast out all the disorderly elements . . . In order to do this we'll send this rotten parliament on a long vacation."

Before the Front Populaire appeared on the scene, the Croix de Feu went in more heavily for fascism. Last March it clamored for a corporative state à la Mussolini. It also wanted to trim the claws of the trade unions and to control industry. After the success of the Front Populaire became evident, Colonel de la Rocque declared: "Although I am deeply attached to tradition, I believe that progress lies to the left. . . . Our frontiers are monarchism to the right and communism to the left." At the same time the Colonel admitted that many monarchists have joined his movement, and a weekly newspaper of the Front Populaire, the *Lumière,* brought to light the fact that De la Rocque's two brothers are active in the French royalist movement and that the royalists encourage their followers to join the Croix de Feu.

The movement is supplied with money by some of the two hundred wealthy families which, as M. Daladier declared in his address at the Mutualité, direct the fate of France. The leaders of the Front Populaire have repeatedly declared that De la Rocque receives support from such men as François de Wendel, a regent of the Bank of France and chairman of the Comité des Forges, Baron Edouard de Rothschild, banker and railway magnate, and Ernest Mercier, electricity and chemical-products king. The press controlled by these men either directly or indirectly encourages the Croix de Feu. The staid *Temps,* which at first tried silence in its campaign against the Front Populaire, now devotes a vitriolic column to the anti-fascist movement nearly every day.

At the present moment the Front Populaire seems to be the victor all along the line. In this it has been unintentionally helped by the deflationary policy of the Laval government. Laval has put through drastic measures to decrease the budget deficit, which has increased during the last three years at the rate of seven billion francs annually. He has cut the wages, salaries, and pensions of government employees 10 per cent. This measure has helped to swell the ranks of the Front Populaire. Since the cost of living in France is still about 20 per cent higher than in the United States, discontent on account of *la vie chère* is strong among the small bourgeoisie.

The Croix de Feu, on the other hand, is unable to become the reservoir of discontent because of its commitments to the heavy industries and their satellites. By concentrating its attacks on the Front Populaire, it has assumed a negative and sterile attitude not in line with the needs of the French masses. The Front Populaire has established its supremacy in the streets of Paris, which for many years were at the mercy of a reactionary minority composed of royalists, hooligans, and the admirers of Italian fascism. The Front is making ready to challenge M. Laval when the Chamber convenes later in the autumn. If Daladier can sway that part of the Radical Socialist Party now under Herriot's influence, the Front Populaire will have a clear parliamentary majority. If he fails to achieve this purpose, he and his allies will have to take their case to the electorate next year, when the mandate of the present Chamber of Deputies expires. At any rate, the Front is determined not to let the right cheat the left, as it has done several times, by stirring up the country and setting the mob at the throat of leftist governments. The Front Populaire marches on, carried along by an elementary force, a powerful instrument in maintaining France as one of the last refuges of democracy.

Can We Have a Housing Program?

Two Articles by ALBERT MAYER

The Nation, October 9 and October 16

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Correspondence

"Profitable Poverty"

To the Editors of The Nation:

In the Atlanta *Journal* of August 4 appeared an article, supplied by a syndicate I suppose, by Walter B. Pitkin. The article described a retreat into "Profitable Poverty" by an elderly lawyer and his wife, made destitute by the depression. Probably millions of people will read it with approval—clergymen, teachers, all the mass of white-collar people, constituting a vast majority of our population, who rejoice in such leadership as Mr. Pitkin's. For Mr. Pitkin is one of our spiritual leaders. In the pages of newspapers, magazines, and books he gives us vigorous, optimistic counsel about making the best of this best of all possible worlds. The secure, the comfortable Mr. Pitkin has no patience with pessimism. He has no patience with any of us who allow ourselves to be oppressed by the fact that about nine-tenths of the earth's inhabitants find it impossible to be secure and comfortable, find it impossible, indeed, under present economic conditions to be anything but wretchedly insecure and uncomfortable.

The article alluded to is a positive paean, a triumphant outpouring in the face of the dire plight of two members of the underprivileged nine-tenths of us. To be sure, Mr. Pitkin does not call it a plight, nor will his followers call it a plight. Relishing exceedingly, with Mr. Pitkin, such phrases of the old lawyer as ". . . the simple life of the country, a little place by the side of the winding road. . . . We took the holy vow of poverty right out in the moonlight. . . . We swore to get along with what we made or raised or found—until we got stuck"—relishing these phrases, Mr. Pitkin and his disciples forget these other phrases: "Gosh! Wasn't the first year awful! Especially the winter. I won't go into that winter. I hate to think of it. She almost turned up her toes trying to swing the family wash on the same day she set out 600 tomato plants. When you're past fifty your knees grow kinks if you stay on them too long."

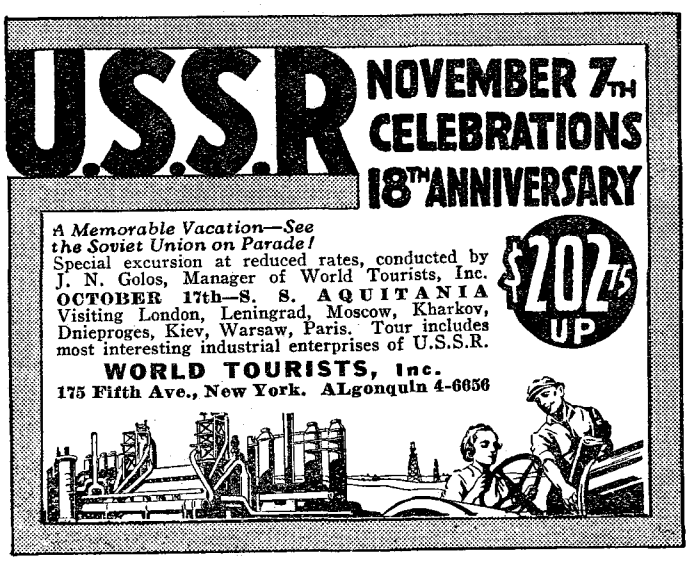
Mr. Pitkin apparently forgets the anguish of the undernourished, scantily clothed, scantily warmed, overtired old bodies. He forgets the almost certain coming of illness, rheumatism, helplessness, lack of proper nursing, lack of money for doctors' fees. Clearly he forgets his love for the beauty and comfort of his own environment—its books, its pictures, its music, its association with congenial friends—as he describes in exalted strain the home of the dwellers in "Profitable Poverty":

> I went in and saw the plainest of plain little houses. Bare floors. No pictures on the walls. Not a trimming anywhere. Suddenly it flashed on me. A monastery! Cool, plain, austere . . . I looked back at the house . . . with something of a heart throb. . . . Surely this is "Profitable Poverty."

And, most tragic lapse of memory in a spiritual leader, Mr. Pitkin forgets that under a righteous social system, with present possibilities of production and distribution realized, the stress, the deprivation, about which he throws a haze of almost religious fervor would not exist.

In Mr. Pitkin's article is there any word of sympathy for the agony of that first winter, to say nothing of the certainty of suffering to come? No indeed! Mr. Pitkin is too busy with his attempt to camouflage for himself and his readers the cruelties of our present social order. Would he experience a blinding enlightenment if circumstances should force him to undergo with his wife the same experience of "Profitable Poverty"?

Iowa, Ga., August 6 Agnes Morgan


U.S.S.R
NOVEMBER 7TH
CELEBRATIONS
18TH ANNIVERSARY
A Memorable Vacation—See the Soviet Union on Parade!
Special excursion at reduced rates, conducted by J. N. Golos, Manager of World Tourists, Inc.
OCTOBER 17th—S. S. AQUITANIA
Visiting London, Leningrad, Moscow, Kharkov, Dnieproges, Kiev, Warsaw, Paris. Tour includes most interesting industrial enterprises of U.S.S.R.
$202.75 UP
WORLD TOURISTS, Inc.
175 Fifth Ave., New York. ALgonquin 4-6656

Oregon Labor and the Townsend Plan

To the Editors of The Nation:

In *The Nation* of September 4 there appeared a misstatement relative to the convention of the Oregon State Federation of Labor. In enumerating the acts of the convention your editorial declared that it commended the principles of the Townsend old-age pension plan. The convention did exactly the opposite; it specifically denounced the transaction tax and refused to give indorsement to the plan in any manner.

Two resolutions on the Townsend plan were introduced in the convention—one approving and one denouncing the Townsend plan. The convention adopted the latter. Supporters of the Townsend plan, who were few in number, when they found that their resolution would be rejected, fought vainly to amend the other resolution so that it would vaguely approve the Townsend "principles."

In an effort to gain some slight recognition which might be interpreted as favoring the Townsend plan, the state manager of the Townsend forces sent credentials for a fraternal delegate to the convention. This trick was denounced on the floor, and the convention declined to receive the delegate. The convention was open to all visitors, yet when a motion was made to invite this Townsend delegate to remain as a visitor—a courtesy extended to everyone, friend or foe—the motion was adopted only by the narrow margin of two votes.

The convention did declare for an adequate old-age pension, as conventions of this federation had done long before Dr. Townsend ever thought of his scheme.

Portland, Ore., September 10 Kelly Loe

[We are glad to record the fact that the Oregon State Federation of Labor did not indorse the principles of the Townsend plan; that indorsement seemed to us a flaw in an otherwise intelligent and decisive program. We based our editorial comment on the following sentence taken from a report of the convention which appeared in the New York *Times* of August 25: "Another resolution was passed unanimously, commending the principle of the Townsend old-age pension plan, but stipulating that the Townsend transaction tax was a vicious burden on the poor and should be replaced by steeply graduated income levies."—Editors The Nation.]

When writing to advertisers please mention The Nation

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In Defense of the O'Connors

To the Editors of The Nation:

I read with considerable interest an article appearing in *The Nation* of August 14 with reference to J. F. T. O'Connor, Comptroller of the Currency. I do not believe that you are cognizant of certain pertinent facts in connection with the appointment of Mr. William O'Connor, brother of the Comptroller, to the post of receiver of the First National Bank in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Here in Grand Forks we feel that William O'Connor is very well equipped for the job that he holds. Over 200 depositors of this particular bank wrote the Comptroller requesting that he be appointed; and to my knowledge, as a resident of Grand Forks, there has been no complaint from anyone as to the administration of the trust.

I happen to be a Republican by faith, still waiting for a Moses to come forth from the bulrushes, but I do not believe that unjust criticism of a competent official, no matter what his party affiliations may be, should pass unchallenged by a resident of the city wherein the officer in question resides, who has known him as a business man and banker for years.

Grand Forks, N. D., September 5 A. N. Cooper

To the Editors of The Nation:

. . . I have known J. F. T. O'Connor almost all his life. He was a power in politics when here. He ran for Senator and Governor against great odds. The Republican majority was over 65,000, O'Connor lost by around 2,000, and a change of one vote in each precinct would have elected him. Owing to the great work he did Roosevelt was able to carry the state. He was considered one of the best attorneys in the state, and is considered so in California.

The Honorable J. F. T. O'Connor is loved and respected by everyone in this state; from the time he enters its borders until he leaves he is besieged with invitations to speak. Two of the largest banquets ever given an individual were given him on his last visit to this state. The state university conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws. His work in opening the new bank in this city and in paying a 50 per cent dividend to the depositors in the closed bank will cause his name to live forever in the hearts of the people of this city.

Grand Forks, N. D., September 5 Frank R. Ryan

Nancy and Her Father

To the Editors of The Nation:

Nancy Bedford-Jones is as refreshing as a buttercup in a snow bank at timberline. As youth stands before the quagmire created by well-meaning progenitors, nerves quiver at the sight of nowhere to go. Yet Nancy pushes on, doing what all youth is bound to do—trying to unfold the kinks of a rotten system.

Nancy's tender years indicate the obvious extent of the damage wrought by the society which her father defends so inadequately and which exists by preeminent right of "pledges." Youth, however, is not a matter of years. Youth is the symbol of progress, not the triumph of one generation over another.

It is not easy to defy one's father; but to defy by pointing a finger at a liar and to do it publicly at that—well, we can almost count the number of times Nancy must have swallowed that hard lump in her throat. In a world that has learned to impress young folk with the "honor" rule, we hail this youthful writer as one so courageous as to recognize dishonesty in any environment.

West Point, Neb., September 10 Boyd von Seggern

Economics, Sociology History

Technology and Revolution Symposium Course
Vladimir Karapetoff, Samuel Valenstein, Harold Loeb, Felix Frazer, Ole Singstad, Walter M. Rautenstrauch, Herman Kobbe.

Social Origins and Modern Problems, Edward M. Barrows
Science and Economic Problems, Jack Schuyler
Current Economics, Algernon Lee
Evolution of Economic Theory, Jack Barbash
Economic Doctrines of Karl Marx, Bela Low
Introduction to Socialism, David P. Berenberg
Labor and Socialism in the U. S., William E. Duffy
International Socialism, Bela Low
Economic and Social History of Western Europe, Ben Haskel
The Russian Revolution, Algernon Lee, Joseph Shaplen
Growth of Democratic Institutions, William E. Bohn

Season opens Oct. 8th. Many other courses. Course fees very low. Single admissions, 50c. Write, call, or phone for complete bulletin.

RAND SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
7 East 15th Street ALgonquin 4-3094

SOCIAL ASPECTS OF HOUSING
A Field and Lecture Course Conducted by
ABRAHAM GOLDFELD
Saturdays at 2 P.M., beginning October 5
15 sessions, including 9 field trips—$12.50

THE NEW SCHOOL
FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH
66 WEST 12th STREET, NEW YORK Algonquin 4-2567

The School For Adult Jewish Education
221 West 57th Street

To meet a wide-felt need for authentic knowledge about the Jew in the modern world, and for the scientific study of Jewish problems in the light of world problems.

LECTURERS 1935-36

Elsie Glück	Marvin Lowenthal
Oscar I. Janowsky	Louis Lozowick
Hans Kohn	Koppel S. Pinson
Asriel Knox	Nathan Reich

Leo W. Schwarz, *Director*

Teachers' Credit Given

For further information write or telephone the Secretary
(ALgonquin 4-0182)

When writing to advertisers please mention The Nation

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Labor and Industry

Local 22

By GEORGE SIMPSON

THERE are about 85,000 dressmakers in New York City. In the spring of 1933 only 10,000 of them were organized in the Joint Board of Dressmakers, which consists of four locals. At that time the overwhelming majority of dressmakers were working in open shops—under sweatshop conditions, for miserable wages, at long hours. In one of the four locals, Local 22, the elections had resulted in a victory for the Dressmakers' Progressive Group, made up of anarchists, left-wing Socialists, militant non-partisans, and members of the Communist Opposition, the so-called Lovestonites. A member of the national executive committee of the last-named organization, Charles S. Zimmermann, had been elected secretary-manager. On taking office, the progressive administration of Local 22 attempted to have the Joint Board call a general strike in the dressmaking industry for the improvement of conditions. The proposal was at first turned down, but impetus was given to it when the NRA appeared in June of that year.

In August, 1933, the Joint Board called out its four locals in a strike which proved successful beyond even the fondest dreams of the progressives of Local 22: 70,000 dressmakers poured out into the streets of New York's garment district, and stayed out until they won. Within a week the smoke of the class struggle cleared and the workers discovered the fruits of organization and solidarity. They had turned into actuality the slogan under which the strike was carried on: "Make Your Code on the Picket Line." The demands they won—a thirty-five-hour week with no overtime, a guaranteed minimum-wage scale, and the security of the worker's job after he has worked thirty-five hours—formed the basis of the NRA code which was written in October, 1933. As a result, the membership of the Joint Board and of Local 22 soared. From 10,000 the Joint Board grew to 80,000, and from 3,000 Local 22 grew to 30,000. Ninety-five per cent of the dressmakers of New York were thus organized in the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, the parent organization.

One of the first steps taken by the progressives of Local 22, before the strike, was to call for unity with the dressmakers in the Needle Trades Workers' Industrial Union, which had been formed in 1929 by the official Communist Party. Dual unionism had been not the least of the issues which caused the split between the Stalinites and the Lovestonites. The Industrial Union before the strike had a greater membership among the dressmakers than the progressives had, and it seems probable that the Stalinites would have won control of Local 22 if they had then accepted. However, they refused. After the strike the dressmakers' division of the Industrial Union was a mere skeleton, and the progressives left it to perish of its own sectarianism. This it did last year when the Stalinites began to filter back into the A. F. of L. in all fields.

With the help of the extreme right wing the Stalinites have carried on campaigns, electoral and tactical, against the progressive administration, in a bloc known as the "left group." But they have never been able to win more than 30 per cent of the votes, even with the help of the news and editorial columns of the *Daily Worker*. Whether there will be unity between the Stalinites and the Lovestonites depends on the international situation in communism and not simply on the situation in the dressmaking industry.

The chief immediate aim of the progressives in Local 22 is the maintenance of the victories won in the strike of 1933. To that end they seem willing to ask for another strike if the employers break the agreement of 1933. In each shop there is a shop chairman who looks into violations of the agreement and discrimination against workers. The local has even called individual shop strikes or "stoppages" where it has felt that the employer could not be brought to terms by any other means. So untrustworthy do the workers deem the employers that they have forced them to agree to permit union accountants to investigate their books. As a result, Local 22 has succeeded this year in having paid to the workers more than $300,000 in back pay withheld through evasion of the wage scale by the employers.

Unlike those who advocate "pure and simple" unionism and fight only for higher pay and shorter hours the progressives consider the trade union a training school for workers. An educational campaign has been instituted which is rivaled in the labor movement only by that of the parent International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. Nine schools in various parts of New York City have been established and fifty classes a week are given in English, Yiddish, and Spanish. Among the 30,000 members there are 2,500 Negroes and 2,000 Latin Americans. The greater portion of the membership is made up of women who have never had the advantages of school training. The educational department is giving them opportunities hitherto denied them and they are being made into a small class-conscious army which not only fights for its own rights but contributes to the strike funds of less fortunate unions struggling for better conditions. In New York City the union has been aiding unappointed teachers in their campaign for smaller classes and more jobs. At City College aid has been extended to students fighting the reactionary administration there.

Meanwhile its members have not neglected their own needs. On the basis of dues of thirty-five cents a week, free athletic and recreation facilities are provided, and for a small monthly fee a worker is entitled to sick and death benefits which would be otherwise far beyond his means.

The difference in the philosophy of trade unionism underlying the development of Local 22 since 1933 and that of the executive council of the American Federation of Labor was forcefully brought out last year by the general strike on the Pacific Coast. Green, it will be remembered, disowned that strike in the name of the A. F. of L. Zimmermann denounced him in a press conference, and pledged the aid of Local 22 to the West Coast strikers in their fierce fight. The president of the A. F. of L., much angered, sent Zimmermann a letter denouncing him as a Communist and a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fomenter of labor troubles. Zimmermann, on receipt of the letter, took the opportunity to make a long, careful answer in which he opposed the class struggle to pure and simple trade unionism. "The policies of class collaboration," he wrote to Green, "of so-called peaceful partnership between employer and employee, which took such hold in the years before the crisis, are now admittedly bankrupt. They have shown that they can lead labor to nothing but disaster and defeat. Today a new spirit is spreading in the ranks of the labor movement. . . . The great need of the day, in my opinion, is for the official philosophy, methods, and tactics of the American Federation of Labor to be brought into line with this new spirit of progressivism and militancy."

The difference between the two philosophies was shown in action as well as in words when the Supreme Court voided the NRA. Green bewailed the fact and placed the hope of labor in the Wagner labor-disputes bill. Local 22, with the other three locals of the Joint Board of Dressmakers, called the workers out into the garment district one Saturday in early June to demonstrate against the decision and thus warn the dress manufacturers that they were ready to fight chiseling. This mass protest was the only one made in the country. Thus far the dressmakers have retained the gains of 1933 without resorting to large-scale strikes.

Within the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, Local 22 is something of a gadfly. At the last national convention of the union, the representatives of Local 22 offered thirty-two resolutions which they wished to have passed. These dealt with such questions as industrial unionism, a labor party, affiliation of the A. F. of L. with the International Federation of Trade Unions, and denunciation of the National Civic Federation, of which Matthew Woll is a chief officer. The I. L. G. W. U. has always been in the forefront of the fight for equality of Negroes in the American labor movement; Local 22 gave its parent a chance to show its position in Chicago at the convention. When the local's delegates arrived in the city, the Negro representatives were refused admission to the convention hotel, the Medinah Club. After a struggle they were housed—and then mistreated. The delegates of Local 22 succeeded in moving the entire convention to another hotel, where no discrimination was shown.

When William Green and Matthew Woll developed a red scare over the amalgamation of the official Communist furriers' union with the A. F. of L. union, Zimmermann, instead of using it as an opportunity to show his resentment against the Stalinites for their opposition to him, turned the other cheek and took issue with Green and Woll. He said that membership in a union depended on one's status as a worker and not on one's political beliefs. The *New Masses* hailed him for it without mentioning his politics.

The Progressive Group is not the property of any one radical faction. Working in harmony within it are individuals of varying shades of radicalism, some of whom are at complete variance with others on certain points. Thus, the anarchists and the Lovestonites have diametrically opposite views on the proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union. Yet they are able to work together not only within Local 22 but in several other unions having progressive groups. Their cooperation has been so fruitful that plans are now under way to form a progressive labor center with headquarters in New York.

Mixed Pickles

By HEYWOOD BROUN

A COMMITTEE of the New York Newspaper Guild called recently on Arthur Hays Sulzberger, publisher of the New York *Times,* for the purpose of collective bargaining. Mr. Sulzberger was extremely courteous but not disposed to grant the Guild proposals. Some of the debate was probably on subjects of local interest but at least one point came up which might be of concern to all newspaper readers as well as newspaper workers. Mr. Sulzberger undertook after the conference to sum up his position in writing. The rebuttal which is offered here is not my own but a contribution from a Guild member of the *Times.*

If the reason given by the New York *Times* for opposing the Guild came to be taken seriously by the Guild opposition generally and applied as a working proposition, it would lead to a revolution in our business so far-reaching that it would shake the foundations of every institution affected by public opinion.

Of course, no such thing is going to happen, but before going further into the matter let us examine the statement made to the Guild by the *Times* publisher:

"We are opposed to the principle of an organization such as we understand the Guild to be. Our objection to this idea lies not in organization *per se,* but because we fear a uniformity of viewpoint on the part of those persons who are intrusted with the responsibility of securing, writing, and editing the news. We raise no question as to any individual beliefs or predilections. We merely wish to see that all the members of our news department do not hold the same views. In that manner the human prejudices which we all possess are apt to be compensated for."

Thus does the greatest newspaper formulate the principle that it is its duty to see to it that the staff members hold views so diverging that they balance. How many Republicans, Democrats, Hitlerites, anti-Hitlerites, Holy Rollers, Free Thinkers, and so on does it take, and in what proportions, to make and maintain this mysterious balance? If the management of this great newspaper had elaborated on its policy it might well have become first-page news in every newspaper in the land.

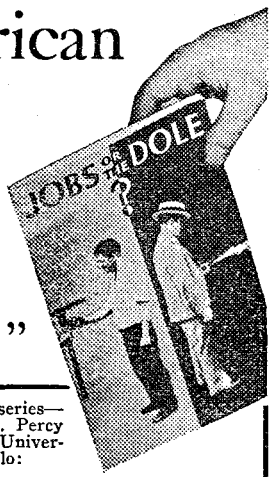
To apply the policy a newspaper staff would be made somewhat in the manner of mulligan. And the day would come when a reporter who had seen a story from a totally different viewpoint than the editor's would be able to argue successfully that he had not fallen down on the story and refuse to change it on the ground that the management wanted compensating viewpoints (bad ones to compensate for good ones, perhaps) and that his was one of them.

I venture to say that the views of the *Times* staff are unanimous on simple arithmetic, the theory that the world is round, the propositions that a falling body gains momentum and that a rope is stronger than its individual strands. There is no need for any divergence of opinion on any of these matters except the last-mentioned, which comes perilously close to the idea that in union there is strength. If *Times* men blazon that proposition to the world, there must be compensating *Times* men to set down on paper that on the other hand a rope has weak strands, that indeed there is no such thing as a perfect rope; and, anyhow, why make a rope in these dark days when there is the possibility that one may hang oneself with it?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

9 Vital American Problems

are discussed in a spirit of impartial scientific inquiry in this series of brief, inexpensive books



"American Primers"

Pungently and brilliantly ILLUSTRATED by F. G. Cooper, famous as the Art Editor of *Life* for years . . . WRITTEN to present readable and authoritative information, by experts in the various fields . . . PRICED at only

25 cents
EACH

and available at special discount in large quantities for discussion groups. Size: 5″ x 9″. Photographic covers on heavy paper.

Titles in the series—Edited by Dr. Percy W. Bidwell, University of Buffalo:

YOUTH IN THE DEPRESSION
by Kingsley Davis
MONEY
by Marc Rose and R. L. Horne
THE FARM BUSINESS
by Roman L. Horne
FRIENDS OR ENEMIES?
(Foreign Relations)
by Julius W. Pratt
CRIME by Nathaniel Cantor
STRIKES by Joseph J. Senturia
BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT
by J. C. Crighton and J. J. Senturia
JOBS, OR THE DOLE?
by Neal B. DeNood
YOU AND MACHINES
by William F. Ogburn

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
5750 Ellis Avenue, Chicago

ANY SPARE TIME?

We'll BUY It!

You believe in THE NATION and the liberal principles which it champions. Then why not, in your spare time, renew the expiring NATION subscriptions of your friends and introduce THE NATION to other intelligent readers capable of enjoying it?

The very idea suggests congenial evenings—stimulating discussions—profitable employment!

For we pay well for all orders you report.

Details gladly presented. No obligation, of course.

For details, mail the coupon!

THE NATION, 20 Vesey Street, New York City

Send me the details regarding your agents' offer.

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Why should not the Guild test the devotion of the *Times* to this great new principle that will almost certainly become the device of other opposition publishers? Let it suggest to some of its unemployed friends that they approach the *Times* for jobs on the ground that they hold views not represented on the staff and that are genuinely compensatory for the known views of *Times* writers. Merely to state the proposition this way exposes its absurdity and suggests scenes that would fit in a Gilbert and Sullivan opera but not in the life of the workaday newspaper world, where most men who really have ideas that would compensate for many of those printed take good care to keep them under their hats.

If only the *Times* had submitted that statement of policy to its staff of many kinds of heads for rewriting, I venture to suggest that the processes of mulligan would have preserved only a single sentence of it, and to that three words would have been added so that the sentence would read: "We merely wish to see that all the members of our news department do not hold the same views—on the Guild."

Now I am entirely convinced that Mr. Sulzberger has succeeded in selling himself the idea that his opposition to the Guild is based on the highest ethical motives. At a conference last year he announced that while he did not deny the right of newspaper workers to organize he thought that they should foreswear organization in order to protect the highest standards of journalism.

It might be pointed out to Mr. Sulzberger that his notion that all Guild members are prone to think alike is utterly fantastic. One evening at a meeting of the representative assembly should convince him that it is the Guild itself which has achieved the utopian state of compensating for all prejudices by matching one against another.

It seems to me that sooner or later Mr. Sulzberger will have to face the realities of newspaper publishing in a competitive world. He longs for a news staff which holds no views in common. I can assure him that this is beyond the power of any publisher, even the publisher of the *Times,* to contrive. Every last man on his staff, or any other, would like higher wages and shorter hours. That very natural feeling cannot be eradicated by ukase. And since it exists, no permanent barrier can be maintained against organization, for organization provides the only effective way in which the mass desire can gain any part of its objectives.

Contributors to This Issue

GEORGE and SAMUEL SLAFF are counsel for the Utility Users' Protective League of New Jersey.

CARLETON BEALS, author and journalist, contributes frequently to *The Nation.*

EMIL LENGYEL is the author of "The New Deal in Europe."

GEORGE SIMPSON is a sociologist who has contributed articles to the *Spectator* and other periodicals.

LOUIS FISCHER, *The Nation's* Moscow correspondent, is the author of "Soviet Journey."

LOUIS M. HACKER is lecturer in economics at Columbia University.

ROBERT GIROUX is editor of the *Columbia Review* and moving-picture critic for the *Columbia Spectator.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books, Films, Drama

More Romains

The World from Below (*Men of Good Will,* Volume IV). By Jules Romains. Alfred A. Knopf. $3.

IN "A Letter to My American Readers," which his publishers saw fit to circulate before the appearance of this newest section of his work to be translated, M. Romains defends himself against those of his critics in this country who have dared to insinuate that Mr. Clifton Fadiman of the *New Yorker* was perhaps guilty of a libel on our grandchildren. Mr. Fadiman, it will be recalled, suggested that after the revolution the principal claim to distinction of the present generation will be that its members were the contemporaries of Jules Romains. The good-natured extravagance of this compliment was of course of a sort to prompt a corresponding bitterness of attack on the part of those reviewers who do not hold the same high opinion of M. Romains's qualities as a novelist. Mr. Robert Cantwell was prompted to discover in his work nothing less than a "prologue to fascism," and Mr. Malcolm Cowley nothing more than a pretentious revelation by a second-rate literary mind of its own worst limitations of imagination and taste. To these two critics, for obvious reasons, M. Romains addresses the larger part of his "Letter," which is in many respects one of his most successful exercises, comparable in effect to some of the best letters that pass between the characters in his novel. It takes up each of the objections raised against his work with a directness, an orderliness, and an evenness of temper that are a credit even to the tradition of French polemics. It is all in such superb good taste that one is almost ashamed to point out how much of it is sheer sophistry. For not one of the objections mentioned but is somehow misstated to be made to appear evidence of some profound lack or incapacity in the dissenting critic. Thus Mr. Cowley's quite legitimate complaint that much of Romains's lavish detail is not sufficiently relevant leads to the conclusion that this critic suffers from a reprehensible "blindness of the imagination." What is slurred over is that Mr. Cowley objected not so much to the use of detail in general as to its particular use or abuse in the work in question. But this obfuscation of the issue is surpassed by the eloquence with which M. Romains justifies his complete lack of what Mr. Cowley has referred to as "moral intensity." Here is invoked a formula so pale and shopworn that one had believed no writer born after Flaubert and the naturalists would ever have the face to use it again—the formula of "calm detachment."

The admission that such an attitude is what he is striving for is important to have from M. Romains's own pen because it saves us from the unkindness of naming what is the real trouble with his work to date. It provides the key to that combination of assiduity and relaxed imaginativeness which is coming more and more to be the peculiar effect of his writing. For it is possible for an artist to believe with his mind that an attitude of "calm detachment" is desirable and feasible at the same time that he demonstrates in his practice the inevitable consequences of its application. Unlike Flaubert, whose genius was stronger than his convictions, Romains has allowed an easy intellectual attitude to destroy the intensity of his feeling about experience—whether this be "moral intensity" or something else—to a point at which his work loses the dearest of all values to the literary artist, the value of *felt* experience. For the sake of covering a large canvas, a task dictated by the ambitious mind, he has undertaken to describe realms and modes of feeling with which he has all too obviously too little familiarity and for the plausible rendition of which he is able to summon too little interest. Everything can be set down in the preliminary *esquisse,* in the summaries at the close of each volume; but everything cannot so easily be realized in the corresponding chapters of the work.

An instructive parlor diversion might be arranged by selecting two or three bald sentences from one of these summaries, reading them aloud to a group of habitual novel readers, and then requesting that they be expanded or "filled in" with the appropriate action, dialogue, sentiments, and reflections. "Mionnet finally gets an interview with Mme de Quingey. The looks and manners of this lady. Mionnet points out to her the duty of Catholics in the imminent scandal. Mme de Quingey confides to him her spiritual uneasiness." It would only be necessary to explain that Mionnet is a scheming young ecclesiastic and that the lady referred to is a provincial bluestocking of the most typical sort. What such a test as has been suggested would probably establish is that Romains rarely adds anything but the most commonplace detail and analysis to the commonplace situations indicated in his summaries. The difference between the treatment and the bare summary would constitute the precise measure of his success or failure.

It is only fair to admit that this difference is always to the advantage of the treatment when, as in certain portions of the work, Romains is dealing with characters and events about which he happens to have a certain feeling. The letter of the obscure poetaster Strigelius to his sister, for example, is worth all the chapters describing the love affairs of Germaine Baader, the political campaign of the Marquis de Saint-Papoul, and the tramway scandal in Touraine. Here, as in the friendship between Jallez and Jerphanion, the superior warmth and color of the style reflect the fact that the writer is treating experience in which he has known some degree of participation. A fairer judgment of the Romains work at its present stage of development would perhaps give somewhat greater stress to these occasional triumphs over "calm detachment."

WILLIAM TROY

Chamberlin's History

The Russian Revolution 1917-1921. By William Henry Chamberlin. The Macmillan Company. Two Volumes. $10.

THIS book takes the reader from March, 1917—the overthrow of Czarism—to March, 1921, the proclamation of the New Economic Policy. After a brief sketch of the Romanov dynasty's career and a fine summary of the 1905 abortive revolution and of the pre-war era, the author attacks his main subject. The fall of the Czar, Kerensky's interregnum, and the rise of Bolshevism, events which in the hands of artists and eyewitnesses like John Reed and Leon Trotzky are alive with drama and excitement, become, under Mr. Chamberlin's pen, a slow chronicle recorded in monotone. We come, then, to an evaluation of Lenin, "the Genius of Revolution." This chapter is valuable to the extent that it reveals Mr. Chamberlin's mental processes and his approach to Russian problems. He says, for instance, "Among his [Lenin's] contemporaries Plekhanov surpassed him in breadth of historical judgment and erudition." Now where was the historical judgment of Plekhanov, the Marxist, when he supported Czarist Russia's role in the World War? Lenin's more accurate judgment told him that the war could be the beginning of a Marxist revolution. Mr. Chamberlin respects Plekhanov's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

erudition, forgetting that knowledge is lame if it does not help one to interpret the world. This is Mr. Chamberlin's failing too. He piles up a huge pyramid of facts in these two volumes. Most of them are correct; some are incorrect. But they do not contain much evidence of the author's understanding of the Soviet revolution. Take the essay on Lenin. Chamberlin writes: "Lenin staked his life on a mighty wager, a gigantic act of faith," faith in the establishment, through Bolshevism, of a "final stage of unimagined human welfare and prosperity." But the revolution was not a gamble. Its primary purpose was the transfer of power from the exploiting to the exploited classes. The toilers wanted to manage their own lives; this was reason enough for the revolution. Alone this would be an improvement. It was a certainty, not a gamble. When the masses, according to Chamberlin, took "the plunge into the unknown adventure of the Soviet regime, a regime that would indeed demand of them more sacrifices, perhaps, than Trotzky ever dreamed of," they knew that they would be sacrificing for what would be their own instead of suffering to perpetuate the misrule of others. This is the crux of the 1917-21 years, for very few workers hesitated about their allegiance in this period: they were with the Bolshevik Party because it was the party of the working class and not because it promised a paradise. The Bolsheviks before the revolution never promised much more than proletarian domination. Lenin fiercely opposed Utopian sketches of the future society and of "unimagined human welfare." To be sure, socialism would bring better living standards, but this is not what moved the Bolsheviks and the masses in 1917.

Here and in numerous other cases the author's fundamental difficulty is the absence of theory to guide him. Theory need not clutter up a book but it always directs a good historian's writing. This explains why Chamberlin has a scholastic worship of a principle instead of a dialectician's grasp of a living process. (The illustration will tell what dialectics is.) Lenin, soon after the Bolshevik revolution, declared, apropos of the peasants' desire to seize the land: "As a democratic government, we cannot disregard the decision of the masses, even if we disagree with it." Mr. Chamberlin comments: "This idea of letting the peasants settle their own affairs was scarcely in harmony with many subsequent phases of Bolshevik agrarian policy." Having thus annihilated Lenin with this thrust which has neither poison nor force, the historian lets the matter rest. But in an ever-changing world there are few eternal political principles, and Mr. Chamberlin should have stated, as he states nowhere in these two volumes, that in Lenin's view the Bolshevik revolution started out by being a bourgeois-democratic revolution. In that early stage the Bolsheviks allowed the peasants to destroy the landlords because the chief purpose of the bourgeois-democratic phase was to eradicate such remnants of feudalism as the monarchy, nobility, and estates. Then when the village civil war commenced, and especially when collectivization commenced, Moscow could not allow all the peasants to do as they pleased. It could give this privilege only to the pro-socialist section of the peasantry. For the peasants, without proletarian pressure, would have remained a capitalist class in a socialist country, and that Bolshevism could not tolerate. No betrayal of a principle is involved.

As one reads on, Mr. Chamberlin's array of data becomes as impressive as his lack of grasp of human motives in a revolution. He believes, for instance, that the poor city classes acted out of hatred, envy, and mistrust. This "feeling was ruthless, blind, and undiscriminating." Therefore "it did not spare the liberal or the moderate Socialist with a record of persecution under Tsarism." But maybe it was fine discrimination to distrust such moderate Socialists as Chernov and Gotz, who rushed to the staff headquarters of the Czarist army trying to find forces for the overthrow of Bolshevism. Maybe it was right to hate such liberals as Prince Lvov, Kerensky's Prime Minister, who later worked for the counter-revolutionaries, Denikin and Kolchak. Chamberlin knows the facts. They are in his pages. Yet the masses, to the intellectual, are blind. And if better evidence of a petty-bourgeois approach to revolution is wanted it will be found in these words: "Although he was one of the greatest of revolutionary leaders, Lenin abhorred disorder as a permanent state." Why "although"?

The episode of the convocation and dispersal of the Constituent Assembly in January, 1918, is treated with eminent fairness to show that Bolshevik acts "had robbed the deliberations of the assembly of most of their interest." A collation of some of the information from foreign and Russian sources on the Brest-Litovsk peace with the Kaiser and a large and valuable appendix of documents close the first volume.

The bulk of the second volume is filled with details of the civil war. Their quality will be weighed by the military expert, but their quantity is often confusing. Thus three pages are devoted to the details of an obscure military campaign in Dagestan but only one sentence, in all the two volumes, to Stalin's role in the civil war. Now in recent years mountains of material have been published in the U. S. S. R. on Stalin's significant role during the period covered by Mr. Chamberlin. It is known that at one time Trotzky was withdrawn from the southern anti-Denikin front and Stalin sent in his place on account of sharp difference of opinion in the Kremlin. Mr. Chamberlin omits this. Chamberlin could either have rejected the present thesis of Stalin's pivotal part in the civil war or he could have accepted it. But it looms too big in present-day Soviet politics to be entirely ignored. And it is inaccurate to ignore it. This brings me to my chief objection to Chamberlin's book: it contributes very little to an understanding of post-1921 events, and thus fails in one of the purposes of a history. I miss any discussion of Lenin's mistaken policy in sending the Red Army to Warsaw in 1920, of his admission of this error, and of his quarrel with Radek and Trotzky about it. Page after page is filled with details of military strategy by a layman, but there is no analysis of the political role of Menshevik Georgia which invited or welcomed German, British, and Turkish troops while calling itself "national" and "independent." We learn a great deal about the personalities of Makhno and Gregoriev but nothing about the personality of Stalin. Absolutely no attention is paid to artistic, literary, and scientific activity because Mr. Chamberlin very mistakenly believes that it was "in the main . . . largely paralyzed." As a result of overemphasis on military operations and legislation the creative spirit and creative work of this dynamic youthful period of the revolution are lost sight of. With this positive side of the revolution omitted, with party politics slurred over, and with the searchlight trained upon every anti-Soviet tendency on Soviet territory, Mr. Chamberlin's book becomes more a history of the counter-revolution than of the revolution. He is, incidentally, rather kind to the whites, and in a volume quite devoid of humor or emotion the only touch of sentiment is for the white General Denikin. Chamberlin eulogizes his "idealism" and "unselfish devotion" as witnessed by the fact that he acknowledged Kolchak's supreme authority. The fact is that the British, whose supplies made him, insisted on it. Denikin had no contact with Kolchak and believed, when he accepted his supremacy, that the admiral was still advancing.

The author's discussion of the terror is sane. He estimates with caution that the Cheka shot 50,000 counter-revolutionaries, and suggests, quite rightly, that the counter-revolutionaries' bag was at least as big. Besides, it contained 100,000 Jews slaughtered in white pogroms. Here, nevertheless, I regard it necessary to point out a few of the more important and easily demonstrable inaccuracies in Mr. Chamberlin's dif-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ficult task: Mr. Diamandi, the Rumanian Minister, was arrested after the Rumanian invasion of Bessarabia, not before. Commander-in-Chief Dukhonin was killed in Krylenko's presence, not after Krylenko had left. Krylenko's report to this effect and its confirmation by an anti-Bolshevik eyewitness have been published in "The Bolshevik Revolution" by Bunyan and Fisher. Mr. Chamberlin says there was no connection between the assassination of the German Ambassador Mirbach in Moscow on July 6, 1918, and Savinkov's insurrection in Yaroslavl on the same day. But Savinkov suspects there was. See the stenographic record of his trial. Also, an old book by Benes, Czech Foreign Minister, will show that Chamberlin is more Czech than the Czechs and has distorted the significant Czecho-Slovak episode in Russia.

The last subject treated by Mr. Chamberlin is the transfer from the war communism of 1917-21 to the New Economic Policy. The author undertakes to prove the failure and folly of war communism. Many Bolsheviks thought the same. Lenin wanted to scrap it in March, 1918, and said so, but Chamberlin does not quote him. The introduction of a new system impended at the Ninth Party Congress in 1920, but, as Lenin said on April 9, 1921, it had to be postponed on account of the Polish invasion. No reference to this either. There is far too little Lenin in the whole book. Some day, when more documents are available, a better history of the Soviet revolution will be written.

LOUIS FISCHER

The Pit

The Stars Look Down. By A. J. Cronin. Little, Brown and Company. $2.50.

IN "Hatter's Castle" and in "Three Loves" Dr. Cronin showed himself to be a novelist of considerable power with ability deftly to manipulate a group of characters. "The Stars Look Down" is no less strong, it is highly intelligent, and perhaps a score of persons emerge from it credible and life-size. The scene is a mining town in the north of England; the hero is the Pit—that dark, damp hole underground into which boys of fourteen vanish, and live most of their waking lives. The Pit claims the Fenwicks, miners for generations; Robert, the father of the family, and his son Hughie die there; David returns to it after a brief, passionate adherence to the Labor Party which forgot the miners it had been pledged to save; young Sammy is beginning his pit life when the novel closes. The mine owner, Richard Barras, in whom is concentrated all the power that wealth brings, cannot elude its grip; broken by it, sick and dying, he is on his way back to the pit mouth on his hands and knees when death captures him. Martha Fenwick, to whom the pit is as inevitable as the movement of the seasons, stays, above ground, magnificently preparing her men to enter it at dawn and ministering to them with hot water to clean them of its grime and with food to sustain them when they emerge at night. Even Joe Gowlan, one of the most thoroughgoing scoundrels in fiction, is drawn back to the scene of his youth when he stands for Parliament for Sleescale, triumphantly voted in by the very miners he helped to sell out.

If the Pit is Dr. Cronin's hero, it might be said that his theme is the triumph of vice over virtue. David Fenwick and Joe are the forces of good and evil between whom, from the beginning, the struggle takes place, and it is David who, because he has no other way to make a living, goes back underground and Joe who is the conquering hero in business, politics, and love. David's steady resolution is not broken; his integrity is unscathed by disappointment and betrayal; he preserves his illusions, his hope of ultimate betterment for the miner's lot. As it is for Martha, his mother, the Pit is as much a refuge for him as it is a foe. Virtue is crushed to earth, but David does not doubt that it will rise, if not through himself, then through some other instrument.

It will be seen that Dr. Cronin, with a very different *mise en scène,* has pointed the same moral, as he has covered almost the same period of time, as Miss Glasgow in her "Vein of Iron." It is inner virtue by which men will be saved; if they attain material success without it, they are nevertheless damned. More than Miss Glasgow, however, since he is dealing more specifically with public affairs as well as with the fortunes of private individuals, Dr. Cronin takes his David to the very edge of political revolution—and then returns him to the Pit. David perceives the injustice of the poverty and privation in which the miners live; he knows that nationalization of the industry is the only remedy; he is taken in by the promises of the Labor Party, as his mining constituents are, and with them he is cheated when the promises are not kept. But the brave new world that he feels must sometime materialize takes no concrete shape for him. "Perhaps one day he would rise again from the pit; one day, perhaps, help this plodding army toward a new freedom." Nothing more definite than that.

If his social philosophy is inconclusive, if David's integrity seems a little unsatisfying, Dr. Cronin has made up for it by the variety and strength of his characterizations. With the exception of Mr. Maugham's incomparable Mildred, Dr. Cronin's Jenny is unsurpassed for general meanness and worthlessness; Joe's complete blackguardism is less credible; but Arthur Barras, son of the mine-owner, is a compelling composite of weakness and strength; and the mine disaster, in which eighty-nine miners are drowned or are the victims of blackdamp suffocation and ten others die slowly of starvation, is one of the most admirably breath-taking and dreadful episodes of modern fiction.

DOROTHY VAN DOREN

How Firm a Foundation!

The Du Pont Dynasty. By John K. Winkler. Reynal and Hitchcock. $3.

WITHIN a decade John K. Winkler has published seven biographies, of which six are concerned with the makers and masters of great American fortunes; there undoubtedly will be others, for Mr. Winkler has perfected a technique that allows for quantity production. This study of the Du Ponts has been preceded by books on Hearst, Rockefeller, Morgan, Carnegie, and the Stillmans of the National City Bank. We may anticipate, without any offense to Mr. Winkler, books, perhaps, on the Astors, the Fords, the Havemeyers, and so on and so on. These are the American great, and a hard-working and facile writer is not to be blamed for taking advantage of a reading public's perennial interest in the persons who rule it. If I seem to indicate that Mr. Winkler's achievement is of no particular importance, at the same time I do not feel that I am doing him an injustice; for, working at such speed and in so many diverse fields, he cannot be engaged in economic analysis or social criticism. Mr. Winkler seeks to furnish information of the more obvious kind and to provide entertainment.

For—shall we say?—the readers of the society notes and the financial gossip columns of our metropolitan newspapers Mr. Winkler's productions are quite adequate. They are written very smoothly; they are complete enough as regards biographical details; they contain satisfactory accounts of the outstanding family scandals; and they are—despite the author's free and easy air—properly respectful toward their powerful subjects. Nobody is seriously hurt; at any rate, nobody that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

still really counts. And Mr. Winkler's large reading public does come away from his books knowing how great the fortune for the moment being discussed actually is and a little something of how it was made. If it succeeds in learning nothing of the processes of monopoly development, the inevitable corruption of public servants, the links between industrial and finance capitalism, the ruthless exploitation of working populations, and the imperialist penetration of American capitalism into the far and shady corners of the earth, Mr. Winkler might very justly retort that neither do our scholars throw very much light on these questions.

All this is a great pity, for notably in the case of the Du Ponts there is a remarkable story to be told, nothing less than, in epitome, the whole history of American capitalist growth. The Du Ponts started in 1802 as manufacturers of explosives; not until 1899 did they enter the corporate stage, and even then their capitalization was only $12,000,000; yet by the 1930's they were lording it over industries, banks, and insurance companies with assets running into uncounted billions. During the brief life of two generations this mighty house had completed the cycle from slow industrial expansion through the creation of monopoly, establishment of alliances with European competitors, union with banking houses, to final emergence as a gigantic industrial and financial combine. Today the house of Du Pont has proliferations in innumerable heavy and light industries, stakes in virtually every land, and a great mass of liquid capital which, like the modern mechanized cavalry of the army, can be quickly thrown into those vulnerable industries where temporary distress makes the seizure of control easy. This is not only fascinating as history but it is significant for a proper understanding of our contemporary perplexities; and yet, to date, the only scholarly work on the story of the Du Ponts has been a single Ph.D. thesis of thirty-eight pages that was published in 1912.

Why can popularizers like Mr. Winkler get nowhere? The low estate of economic historical research in our universities is largely to blame. I wish to point out two of the reasons why the productions of our universities cannot hold a candle to the magnificent performances of the European graduate schools. We may note, first, that in those few American universities in which economic history is being seriously cultivated, as a rule direction is in the hands of professors of business administration established in schools of commerce. Closely bound by every tie of interest and loyalty to the present system as a result of such an affiliation, learned preceptors and their disciples necessarily move warily amid the dark jungles of current industrial and financial practices. How can one, in a historical setting, critically analyze the present-day methods of capitalist enterprise functioning as one does in a climate which is being regulated exactly to assure its continuance? For economic history to flourish it must be made a part of pure instead of applied research.

Second, we may note the absence of a general historical orientation among our scholars. Certainly it is not too much to expect of students of economic history that they possess a body of clearly defined ideas concerning the economic and social implications of the general system—that is to say, capitalism—whose particular phenomena they wish to examine. The only such frame of reference is historical materialism. Now, I am not saying that economic historians must be Marxists, but I am saying that unless they are fully aware of the teachings of Marxism as social philosophy and as method they can never be in a position to make contributions in their field that can be of any real significance. We have no scholars of the stature of the Englishmen Tawney and Lipson, the Frenchmen Sée and Mantoux, or the Germans Mehring and Sombart because these men have been familiar with the principles of historical materialism and as a result have been able to relate their researches to the dynamic flow of events. In our universities, on the other hand, our pragmatic blunderings have ended by stultifying investigation and preventing illumination.

LOUIS M. HACKER

Survival with Distinction

Pro Patria. By Ramon J. Sender. Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.50.

IN his foreword the author disclaims all "literary and aesthetic prejudices," and he happily keeps his word. The agreeable thing about this book is its total lack of pretenses—sentimental, egotistic, social, or artistic. In fact, I recall no recent examples of war fiction in which there is so little attitude and so generous a permission to let bare incidents, within their context, speak for themselves. It is Sender's compliment to his subject to have realized that no inflation could make it more ghastly or render his hero more pitiable or more dignified.

This attests likewise to the quality of the style. Even in translation Sender appears as a quietly perspicacious, gently wise writer. His story has a factual and emotional unity that follows the arc transcribed by Viance's record of service in Morocco with the Spanish troops in the attempt to put down the revolt of Abd-el-Krim in 1921. This arc begins to rise as soon as Viance is introduced as the kind of man for whom living is a bitter yet never hollow experience. The abject poverty of his peasant home forces him as a child to become a blacksmith, a smith who has more brawn, more burns and cuts to show than others in the trade, a man who is called to military service just in time to lose his girl to his lieutenant and to be sent to the worst post of all, Africa. The tension rises as Viance shows his tenacious belief in his right to live, shows himself hardened, inarticulate, often blinded by his resentment yet with senses sharp enough to anticipate the rout of his regiment and to point the moment when escape may be made without dishonor.

In the chapters describing his ten days' flight across the waterless, foodless desert waste, where the corpses of men and horses scorch as soon as they are cut down by Moorish scimitars and the shallow empty river beds offer no protection to a fugitive from the moon's spotlight, where the only living things are stray madmen and officers fleeing before the enemy, unwilling to let a filthy, starving common soldier into their cars, human desperation and brutality are brought to a taut, nerve-racking peak. Events assume for the reader, as for Viance, the same fantastic resemblance to the real that is found in nightmares. Horror is its essence, yet the peculiar thing about the horror of Viance's torment is that it purifies rather than degrades. The thirstier Viance becomes, the hungrier he grows, the closer he is driven to madness, the more lucidly he sees himself, the world, and the relation between the two. His determination to live when death by slaughter is inevitable ends the nightmare. Here it is that Sender shows both taste and judgment as a writer. Instead of breaking off the story at this point, he avoids melodrama and continues the narrative to the silent, still defeat awaiting Viance upon his return as a civilian to Spain.

It is this ending and those flashes of insight and kindly human feeling by which Viance retains his self-respect and his sanity, those contrasts between action and reaction, which set the book apart from war novels that are only adventure stories or social tracts in disguise. It is true that the distance is not great or the position too pronounced, but the difference exists and is to be acknowledged. It is the advantage that the simple, naturally appropriate thing frequently has.

FLORENCE CODMAN

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Shorter Notices

Primitives and the Supernatural. By Lucien Lévy-Bruhl. E. P. Dutton and Company. $5.

Dr. Lévy-Bruhl has for many years published compendiums of primitive behavior to illustrate the fact that their behavior differs from ours. He is not interested in using specific psychological criteria to discover the nature of these differences, but is content to identify our behavior in Western civilization in this century as logical, primitive man's as pre-logical. He uses chiefly illustrations of behavior motivated by magico-religious beliefs, and there is no manner of doubt that, whatever religions or systems of magic are under discussion, from whatever level of civilization, logic is not their strong point. They are interesting as different systems of illogical association of ideas, but the effort to find them logically grounded can be fairly ascribed to a habit of thought in our own culture which is certainly less than logical. In his most recent book Dr. Lévy-Bruhl has continued this compendium of illogicality under such headings as good and bad luck, "dispositions," ancestor worship, witchcraft, transgressions and purifications. By "dispositions" he means the will and intention animistically ascribed to the external world. There is a minimum of general discussion in the volume, and it proves to be a published card catalogue of items which, if they were to be meaningful, would have to be illuminated by more information about the culture from which the item is torn.

XXIV Elegies. By John Gould Fletcher. Writers' Editions, Santa Fé. Limited Edition. $2.50.

Mr. Fletcher is minutely interested in the world and highly perplexed by it. Like a chimpanzee, he has curiosity but no method. Lack of an adequate method characterizes both his verse and the intellect which it reveals. Although he was one of the original imagists, imagism for him meant only freedom to pursue his confused groping for expression without the restrictions of the old forms; it did not lead him, as it led some others who took that school as their point of departure, to a new clarity of vision and ultimately to new and more precise forms. The elegies in this volume cover a wide span of geography and a variety of subjects, including Edison, Napoleon, an Empty Skyscraper, a Civil War Cemetery, the Russian Revolution, Tintern Abbey, and the Last Judgment. Mr. Fletcher has surveyed them from all sides, read all relevant documents, and brooded upon them grimly. He has put his observations into fresh and sonorous English, with a wealth of agreeable imagery. But the poem rarely crystallizes about a sharp central impression, and his work does not embody a coherent attitude toward experience. After his travels the poet is merely rather frightened by the human scene:

> Rough winds and gold weeds in the sea,
> The strength of great rollers
> Mile long and twenty feet high,
> Breaking along a wide beach;
> These, these are better
> Than the endless human struggles,
> The insanity of sex,
> The madness of modern speech.

It is altogether fitting that he should have found retreat in the tenets of Southwestern regionalism.

Next Week: Joseph Wood Krutch will review "Eugene O'Neill; A Poet's Quest," by Richard Dana Skinner.

Films

Taxidermy on the Screen

TO call "Anna Karenina" a handsome production is to compliment the makers of Garbo's new picture as one might compliment the embalmers of a well-preserved corpse. It is undoubtedly one of the best-looking pictures of the year. If it is also one of the most lifeless, the fault is in no way Garbo's. She not only surmounts such minor distractions as weighty gowns and several styles of headdress, but with her great gifts of characterization she manages at times to suspend one's disinterest in the archaic plight of a woman victimized by a social situation which no longer exists. Those critics who attacked "Love," the screen version of "Anna Karenina" made in the late twenties, as a fantastic abridgment which completely ignored the social implications of Tolstoy's novel, were justified in so doing. But it is none the less true that the passionate Gilbert and Garbo picture was much more relevant to the era of Elinor Glyn and Clara Bow than the purity-sealed Garbo and March rendition is to ours. The new version includes the social implications of the novel, but the issues are now meaningless, dramatically at least, and the film is justified only as a museum piece.

That it is a handsome museum piece is due to tasteful settings and expert photography; in no sense is it due to distinguished direction. Clarence Brown capitalizes none of those few incidents in the picture which lend themselves to purely cinematic treatment. Only one scene, Anna's suicide, is effective as film, and this seems to owe as much to the imagination of the musical director, Herbert Stothart, as to anything else. As Anna stares at the grinding train wheels and they slowly increase in speed, the music joins in the chorus of sound until a crescendo of such loudness and discord is reached that one knows Anna must kill herself to stop the noise in her head. For the first time one is shaken out of one's lethargy; for the first time the film acts. This shocking suicide was the natural ending for a tragedy, but since it seems to be a tradition that Garbo's pictures end with her close-up, it was necessary to add an innocuous scene with Vronsky (Fredric March) remarking what a wonderful woman Anna was, after which the camera trains on the desk photo of a smiling and toothsome Greta and the picture ends on the note it maintains throughout. The mazurka scene, in which the emotional mix-ups of Vronsky, Anna, Kitty, and Levin are contrasted with a pattern of movement and sound, would have been meat for a first-rate director; in Brown's hands the scene is chaotic and ineffective. For the rest the picture is constructed as a play. It is essentially theatrical and is at its worst in such scenes as the lovers' flight to Venice, where Anna and Vronsky stand on the balcony and gaze at a fake moon, vowing their love in dialogue by S. N. Behrman.

Clemence Dane and Salka Viertel are responsible for the screen play. Excepting that of Miss Garbo, with her individual talents, there are no distinguished performances, though Reginald Denny is unexpectedly pleasing as Yashvin, Vronsky's worldly-wise friend. As Vronsky, Fredric March emphasizes by his dazed manner the essential lifelessness of the film, and Reginald Owen as the philandering Stiva does not even pretend to act.

Cecil De Mille's "The Crusades," at the Astor, is the love story of Loretta Young and Henry Wilcoxon. Why it was necessary to drag Christianity into the picture is not clear from anything on the screen. The one character with charity and greatness of spirit is the Sultan of Islam, Saladin, played

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by Ian Keith. Mr. Wilcoxon's Richard is a bully, Philip of France is a scoundrel ready to ruin the Crusades to avenge his jilted sister, and, as presented, Richard fights at Arsuf not for the true faith but for Loretta Young. The battles are exciting and spectacular because of effective cutting. De Mille directed the battles but his assistant, Anne Buchens, cut them, which puts Mr. De Mille somewhat in the position of a brickmaker and Miss Buchens in that of a builder.

"Peasants," at the Cameo, combines the best and the worst of the Soviet cinema. It is full of vitality, humor, and poignancy, and engages one's emotional interest by that sort of full-bodied characterization one finds in the best of the Russian novels. The faults are for the most part mechanical—bad cutting and poor lighting. There is little use of the dissolve, and unconnected shots follow one another so quickly that the spectator has difficulty in overcoming momentary confusion. Oddly enough, the mechanical defects lend a rawness to the film which enhances rather than hinders its naturalism. Two or three players are recognizable from other Russian films, Gardin in particular, who plays the bearded elder. "Peasants," if not great, is a good film. It is not so good as "Youth of Maxim" or "Chapayev" among the more recent Soviet importations, but of the films current on Broadway it is the most alive and offers the most satisfaction.

ROBERT GIROUX

[*The current films will be reviewed by Mr. Giroux until Mark Van Doren, who is to be* The Nation's *regular film critic, takes up the task later in the month.*]

Drama

Little Man, What Now?

"LIFE'S TOO SHORT" (Broadhurst Theater) is the first play of the new season to take itself very seriously either as comment or as drama. Jed Harris, the producer, appears to have counted very heavily indeed upon the appeal of the story, and under the circumstances it is a pity that the piece should have turned out as feeble as it undoubtedly is. There must be a play in the story of a typical white-collar man turned out of his job and coming only gradually to realize that the little world of which he seemed an indispensable part is no longer there. One way to write it must be the way which the authors of this rueful comedy chose when they made their hero-victim too unimaginative to understand what is really happening and incapable of interpreting his fate in any terms except those involving the machinations of enemies and the failure of the bosses to realize how indispensable he is. Indeed, there are a few moments when "Life's Too Short" seems almost that play; but for the most part it meanders uncertainly from scene to scene, sometimes losing its way among irrelevances, often lingering upon the development of incidents which the audience has already anticipated and the outcome of which it can foresee. For a time the course of events is so typical as to suggest a composite of case histories without any distinguishing feature, and then, as though the authors had come to realize that they had nothing to contribute to the deeper understanding of the situation, the play is turned into a triangle melodrama with the boss giving back a job to the husband whose wife he is trying to seduce.

Part comic, part pathetic, and occasionally verging on melodrama, "Life's Too Short" does not so much fall between two stools as sprawl helplessly among three or four. Despite occasional moments when it rings true, it lacks decisiveness and force and character. Probably these negative defects are the ones from which the others stem, but it is the shift of emphasis from the typical case of the jobless man to the very special case of the helpless husband wronged by his boss which breaks the back of the play and destroys all its unity of effect. One might have a story whose interest lay in the fact that its incidents were typical and that its hero assumed importance only because his story was the story of a hundred thousand like him. One might, on the other hand, center the interest in an individual tragedy based upon a triangular situation for which the depression furnished the local background. But the two things are not the same and the one gets in the way of the other. The typical story which the play seems to set out to tell demands that the solution should be typical also, and the shift from the very general to the very particular case leaves unsatisfied the desire which the first act has aroused to see what the typical outcome of a typical story may be. The hero is too much like many others to be the hero of an individual tragedy, but his fate is too individual to serve as the proper catastrophe for the story of his class. One remembers half a dozen telling moments like that at the very end when the central character straightens up his desk before leaving and turns over the leaf of a new day on the calendar pad before him. One remembers also Leslie Adams's brilliant playing of a scene in a restaurant in the course of which he manages, by the sheer force of his acting, to make real and human and credible that most stereotyped of all characters, the accomplished amorist. But not even the shrewd direction of Mr. Harris can make the play forceful as any kind of whole.

"At Home Abroad," a new revue with Beatrice Lillie, has doubtless by now settled down for the year at the Winter Garden. One can't ask everything in one such show and perhaps this lacks the sustained verve of, let us say, "Anything Goes." But it is far above the average, nevertheless, in several important respects. For one thing the *décor* is consistently beautiful with a style of its own and a way of employing the lavish splendors of light and color without degenerating into what, on the lower levels of the profession, is admiringly called "flash." In addition to the star it has Ethel Waters and one Paul Haakon, a really stunning dancer recently seen with the Fokine ballet. Miss Lillie grows steadily more restrained, and some customers were heard to wish for a bit more of her old-time extravagance. I confess, however, that though I sense the danger of over-subtlety in a clown I find nothing to complain of yet. She has raised to a high art her trick of the sudden lapse into awkwardness, either physical or spiritual, and she seems capable of almost infinite variations upon the theme. Her burlesque of romantic clichés has seldom been funnier than in the scene where she takes off a Vie Parisienne soubrette singing "L'Amour le Merrier," or in another where, as Mitzi, she is followed about the stage by an ardent chorus of guardsmen. In fact, the only complaint I should care to lodge against "At Home Abroad" is its unaccountable waste in leaving Herb Williams without much to do. He is sometimes one of the funniest men in the business.

As for "The Night of January 16" (Ambassador Theater), perhaps it is only decent to confess that I was interested enough to find myself surprised that eleven o'clock had arrived so quickly. I will add only that it is a courtroom melodrama in the course of which things happen calculated to give any judge apoplexy, and that the verdict is rendered by a jury drawn from the audience. "Few Are Chosen" (Fifty-eighth Street Theater) is a mild little play about some novices in a convent who behave in a manner startlingly like that of boarding-school girls. It is not unconvincing and not unentertaining in its quiet way but its qualities are hardly sufficient to create an audience for a play on a subject with which the general public is not, after all, very deeply concerned.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED